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New Neighbors In Old Neighborhoods: Explaining the Role of Heritage Conservation in Sociocultural Sustainability and Gentrification

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Abstract

Cities are struggling with their deteriorated urban neighborhoods. When reinvestment is promoted and new residents move in to these neighborhoods, some older residents are displaced by rising costs of living. This process is called gentrification. Critics have implicated heritage conservation as a cause of gentrification, stating that conservation programs select an exclusionary historicism separate from an authentic lower-class reality. However, in many cases heritage conservation tools are applied by individuals, communities, not-for-profits, and governments to anchor residents to their neighborhood in the face of gentrification. Several case studies are analyzed to determine how different neighborhoods have experienced gentrification and how they have used heritage conservation to combat and mitigate displacement, rising housing costs, and loss of character.

Keywords

Historic Preservation; Heritage Conservation; Sociocultural Sustainability; Gentrification

Disciplines

Architecture | Historic Preservation and Conservation

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NEW NEIGHBORS IN OLD NEIGHBORHOODS

Explaining the Role of Heritage Conservation in

Sociocultural Sustainability and Gentrification

Charles William Lawrence

A THESIS

in

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Glossary

Heritage Conservation – Used synonymously with, and in-place-of, *historic preservation*; adopting the widely used definition: all of the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.¹

Sociocultural Sustainability – A state of balance where cultural and social benefits are shared by everyone equally, now and in the future. Though not necessarily obtainable as a perfect state, the pursuit of ever more sustainability improves a greater proportion of lives.

Social/Cultural Systems – The intangible human networks that connect individuals in a neighborhood to create a *community*. Often, these systems take shape in familiar places; barbershops and local businesses, parks, community centers, entertainment venues, etc.

Gentrification - The process by which higher income households displace lower income residents of a neighborhood, changing the preexisting character of that place.

Triple-bottom-line – This is the overarching goal of sustainability; to achieve a balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and sociocultural stewardship.

¹ Burra Charter definition

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1974 Leopold Adler II and his band of conservation-minded colleagues formed the Savannah Landmarks Rehabilitation project (SLR) as the planning body for the new Savannah Victorian Historic District. The 800-acre area had predominantly minority, low-income renters and the increasing popularity of downtown Savannah was beginning to place significant development pressure on Victorian's residents. Adler and the SLR successfully leveraged historic preservation and low-income housing grants and loans to rehabilitate hundreds of housing units for the poor, while at the same time conserving a significant historic area in downtown Savannah (Adler, 1993).

Several years after the SLR's work in Savannah, Coretta Scott King, the widow of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., co-founded the Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC), a not-for-profit CDC focused on neighborhood conservation, retention of residents, and sustainability in the Martin Luther King Jr. historic district of Atlanta, Georgia. Using a block-by-block rehabilitation approach, HDDC helped retain the area's long-term residents while also conserving an important part of African American heritage and a historic Atlanta neighborhood (NeighborWorks America, 2005).

The work done by the Savannah Landmarks Rehabilitation project and the Historic District Development Corporation are just two examples of how heritage conservation is used together with low-income housing initiatives to achieve interrelated sociocultural goals.

Both Adler and King recognized the importance of heritage conservation in reconnecting a vulnerable population to the place they call home. At the same time, both efforts have resulted in healthy, diverse neighborhoods that continue to attract new investment while maintaining a firm hold on the values that make them special places.

The SLR and the HDDC were formed with the intention of creating sociocultural sustainability in their neighborhoods, whether they expressly identified with the sustainability movement or not. Sociocultural sustainability means “maintaining and enhancing the diverse histories, values, and relationships of contemporary populations” (Low, 2003). It also means maintaining and enhancing equity, accessibility, quality of life and well-being (Colantonio, 2007). Sociocultural sustainability is achieved by conserving our cultural ecosystems, places like historic urban neighborhoods with rich and diverse histories evident in the built environment and the social and cultural networks maintained and enhanced over generations, the things David Throsby would call *cultural capital* (Throsby, 1999).

Unfortunately, the results of the work done by the SLR and the HDDC are available only via anecdotal examples from which it is difficult to generalize. Providing proof for claims that heritage conservation advances sociocultural sustainability is a problem faced by the entire field of heritage conservation. “The fundamental rationale for why we preserve is

the contribution it makes to social sustainability. Yet it is precisely this rationale that is most lacking in research and scholarship” (Avrami, 2009).

When Erica Avrami identified this absence of scrutiny in sociocultural research it was not an indictment, but rather a challenge to the field of conservation to do a better job demonstrating how values-based conservation of the built environment can promote sociocultural sustainability – to find more examples like the Savannah Landmarks Rehabilitation project and the Historic District Development Corporation and to empirically measure their results.

One of the reasons for developing empirical research on the effects of heritage conservation on sociocultural sustainability is the persistent body of opposing scholarship that expressly blames conservation practices for creating gentrification pressures. Gentrification is the process by which higher income households displace lower income residents of a neighborhood, changing the preexisting character of that place ¹. Heritage conservation’s critics suggest that it is a divisive tool of a bourgeois elite meant to push out undesirable residents through the use of aesthetics-based land use controls (Zukin, *Gentrification: Culture and Capital in the Urban Core*, 1987). Gentrification is essentially the antithesis of sociocultural sustainability in that it undermines preexisting social and cultural networks, favoring wealth generation without equity.

¹ This definition of gentrification is taken from the widely used definition given in Kennedy & Leonard, 2001. A more detailed exploration of the concept of gentrification is presented in Chapter 2.

Neil Smith captures this anti-conservation sentiment in his critical response to Listokin, Listokin, and Lahr's seminal work on the contributions of historic preservation to housing and economic development²;

The benefits of historic preservation in terms of 'economic and community development' are heavily weighted toward one part of the population, while the costs largely fall to a quite different group... Historic preservation has thrived on popular appeals to the "national interest" and to a common cultural heritage, but the social bifurcation of who benefits and who pays belies these claims (Smith, 1998).

Smith contends that heritage conservation implicitly produces or works in conjunction with gentrification; that without explicit social protections heritage conservation will inevitably lead to gentrification.

The driving hypothesis for this thesis is that heritage conservation tools are used by individuals, communities, and governments to protect and enhance the social and cultural values associated with historic neighborhoods for the benefit of a wide group of stakeholders. Contrary to Smith et al, heritage conservation does not lead to gentrification but rather is used as often to mitigate the negative consequences of gentrification.

This thesis begins with an exploration of the social history of heritage conservation. That is, the development of conservation and preservation strategies that have been designed with the goal of engendering sociocultural sustainability. The goal of this chapter is to suggest an alternative history, or perhaps, an additional history, of American heritage

² See Listokin, Listokin, & Lahr, 1998

conservation, one based on social and cultural capital rather than the occasionally held view that conservation is about selective historicism, nostalgic marketing or aesthetic enlightenment.

The body of scholarly work on gentrification is as vast as it is varied and represents a de facto analysis of a lack of sociocultural sustainability in many inner-city neighborhoods. Chapter Three explores this process, its definitions, causes and effects, through a review of the scholarly literature. For a more detailed look at the difficulties associated with defining the concept of gentrification see London et al (1984) and Atkinson (2003). For the earliest causal models of gentrification see Smith (1979, 1986) and Ley (1986) or the review by Hamnett (1991).

Following the exploration of gentrification is a review of the scholarly literature connecting gentrification to heritage conservation and connecting heritage conservation to various elements of sociocultural sustainability. Much more needs to be done in terms of gathering empirical evidence to support heritage conservation's positive effect on sociocultural systems, but the scholarship identified here is a start. The groundwork has been laid in terms of demonstrating heritage conservation's positive environmental and economic effects³, however, much more needs to be done to demonstrate the scope and reach of the benefits (i.e. demonstrating who gains and how). Scholarship has begun building frameworks

³ See for example the "First Annual Report on the Economic Impact of the Federal Historic Tax Credit", The Historic Tax Credit Coalition, March 2010 or visit www.preservationnation.org

for demonstrating and measuring the social and cultural benefits of conservation, considering such factors like social and cultural capital (Throsby, 1999; Avrami, 2004; Balderstone, 2004); quality of life (McKenzie, 2004; Frey, 2007); and equity and accessibility (Polese & Stren, 2000; EPSD, 2004), however, long range studies measuring the cause and effect of heritage conservation on sociocultural sustainability are still lacking.

Finally, as empirical research, several cases are analyzed where the use of heritage conservation tools has led to several very different outcomes. In the Society Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia city planners used a conservation approach to transform a blighted district. The results were mixed; hundreds of historically important buildings were preserved and the area is now a thriving residential haven, however, many preexisting residents were displaced and the Housing Authority's success at relocating poor residents is undetermined.

The East Austin neighborhoods of Austin, Texas have become increasingly popular with urbanites and new immigrants alike, prompting increases in housing costs and the concerns of one particularly outspoken activist group. Heritage conservation ordinances were one of the primary scapegoats of this group who blamed the policies for creating incentives for wealthy whites and putting undue burdens on the poorer minorities. After several in-depth studies by the city it was found that not only was gentrification occurring in an

unexpected way, heritage conservation tools were effectively mitigating the negative consequences. There are now several new historic districts in the works.

The third case, the Shaw neighborhood of Washington, DC, is a traditionally African American community where gentrification concerns have led to heated debates over the causes and effects. One conservation minded CDC, and several local historic districts have seen mixed results in their ability to hold back displacement and increasing housing costs.

These three cases demonstrate a range of outcomes determined by the use of heritage conservation tools. At one end of the spectrum of neighborhood conservation is the top-down planning exemplified by Society Hill, where conservation was applied as a theme in a larger renewal plan. The scope and scale of Society Hill could only be achieved through coordinated city-wide planning and has resulted in a healthy residential neighborhood supported by a healthy central business district. Though top-down planning was the norm for the time, it failed to appreciate community-identified assets and thus lost much of its earlier character and many of its preexisting residents.

At the other end of the neighborhood conservation spectrum is the grassroots conservation work of the likes of Manna CDC (or HDCDC and SLR). In this scenario, neighborhood needs are assessed and assets identified. Heritage conservation tools are then applied where needed to leverage the neighborhood's historic assets. At this level, many of

the elements of sociocultural sustainability are considered, sometimes on a case-by-case basis, and conservation tools are applied when they can be most effective. This model often has a high rate of success in both conservation and in maintaining sociocultural sustainability, however the scale of these efforts remains limited by a lack of funding, staff, and time. Thus, development or divestment pressures can overwhelm the community's efforts.

In the middle of this spectrum are the combined efforts of city planning agencies and neighborhood groups. In this model, conservation-minded planning agencies (like a historic or planning commission) work with neighborhood groups (like a historic district association or CDC) to evaluate the community's needs and assets and devise a plan best suited to meet those needs by activating the assets. In East Austin, after initial opposition and significant research, the city is well on its way to achieving both neighborhood revitalization and sociocultural sustainability through conservation.

Heritage conservation is used by diverse populations to affect a wide range of goals. Rather than an approach used by one group and with only one purpose, heritage conservation at the neighborhood level is more often a tool applied in different ways for the benefit of the community and in some cases, the benefit of the community's least advantaged residents. In some cases, heritage conservation comes in the form of needed tax incentives that enable the creation of low-income housing, in others it is a means of protecting a vulnerable population from large-scale development. At times it is used as an economic

revitalization tool by city agencies while at others it serves as an economic stabilization tool utilized by community development corporations. Heritage conservation is an effective approach to creating and maintaining sociocultural sustainability at the neighborhood level.

Chapter 2 – A Social History of Heritage Conservation

Heritage conservation in the United States today represents the development of three distinct philosophies regarding the conservation of the built environment: idealism, aestheticism, and reform. These philosophies have been informed by social and scientific trends of their time and have evolved into the sophisticated, principled practice of modern heritage conservation. Early conservation movements sought to protect historic places by emphasizing the important role the historic built environment plays in contemporary society, whether it was through educating newcomers about history, enriching public experiences through beauty, or enhancing connections to the past to effect quality of life in the present. Understanding heritage conservation's historical role in social and cultural enrichment will help to see how it has come to contribute to the modern sociocultural sustainability movement.

Early advocates of conservation restored historic buildings to engage new immigrants and new generations in American ideals through the selective interpretation of a jingoistic history. For the likes of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, John Rockefeller, and Henry Ford, conservation was a didactic tool meant to pass on a historical American ideal.

The American conservation movement also found relevance in architectural and aesthetic merit. Buildings and later, districts, were restored and regulated because of their intrinsic value as works of art – a concept that has been upheld in the Supreme Court on

numerous occasions⁴. Early examples include zoning ordinances used to protect the architectural and historical significance of entire neighborhoods beginning in Charleston, South Carolina in 1931 and later in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1936 and seeing widespread use by the 1970s.

By the turn of the twentieth century conservation was also being developed as a means of achieving social benefits – whereby conserving the buildings of the past would “address problems of overdevelopment, anomie, alienation, and social cleavage” (Mason, 2009). Though not expressly a social sustainability device, some conservation initiatives of the late-1800s and early-1900s had their roots in social reform.

It wasn't until the Antiquities Act of 1906, however, that heritage conservation became National policy and even then it was limited in scope to Presidential proclamations meant to protect only the most significant of landmarks and monuments. The subsequent Historic Sites Act of 1935 expanded the Federal government's role in protecting historic sites of “national significance” by placing national preservation activities into the hands of the National Park Service.

In the years following World War II, heritage sites were threatened most by large public works projects initiated by the federal government. Water impoundment, highway construction and slum clearance programs were destroying numerous historic buildings

⁴ *Berman v. Parker* (1954) 348 U.S. 26; *Stoyanoff v. Berkeley* (1970) 458 S.W.2d 305; *Figarsky v. Historic District Commission* (1976) 368 A.2d 163; *Penn Central v. City of New York* (1978) 438 U.S. 104

(Connally, 1986). These projects tended to disregard cultural heritage in favor of large-scale construction campaigns.

Federal housing initiatives, as part of the early slum clearance campaigns, have always been a double-edged sword for neighborhoods. At one level the housing programs provide needed services to low and moderate-income residents, on the other, many housing programs involve the wholesale demolition of neighborhoods and the transference of the land into the hands of private developers (not to mention the substandard construction of often crowded and cramped units). For many neighborhoods, this meant the total destruction of preexisting social and cultural systems. For heritage conservationists the demolition of historic neighborhoods was intolerable and though the Housing Act of 1954 opened up funding for the rehabilitation of older housing units, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs “lacked the controlling discipline, standards, and experience of a professional preservation service” (Connally, 1986).

Spurred on by the continued destruction of natural and historic resources by the unparalleled expansion and development following World War II, a number of preservation advocates and public bodies organized to develop heritage conservation tools meant to protect these valuable assets. One of the most significant reports to come out of this movement was the 1966 publication “With Heritage So Rich”, the culmination of studies

held by a special committee of United States Conference of Mayors with Ford Foundation support (United States Conference of Mayors, 1966).

The report found that the country suffered from "a feeling of rootlessness" associated with the postwar building boom and a high rate of residential mobility:

If the preservation movement is to be successful...it must go beyond saving occasional historic houses and opening museums. It must be more than a cult of antiquarians. It must do more than revere a few precious national shrines. It must attempt to give a sense of orientation to our society, using structures and objects of the past to establish values of time and place (United States Conference of Mayors, 1966).

Following on the heels of the Conference of Mayors was the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) which codified the best practices of domestic and international heritage conservation agencies and is arguably one of the first places where a holistic concept of sustainability is applied to the built environment. In the opening paragraphs of the first section it states, "The preservation of this irreplaceable heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans".⁵ The triple-bottom-line goals of this legislation are immediately apparent in its call to preserve the multiple values of heritage.

Importantly, is the legislation's use of the word 'community':

⁵ NHPA; Public Law 89-665; 16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.* Sec. 1 (b) 4. <http://www.achp.gov/NHPA.pdf>, retrieved Oct. 20th, 2009.

The 1966 legislation chronologically supplements that of 1935... The Act of 1935 aims 'to provide for the preservation of historic American sites, buildings, objects, and antiquities of national significance...for the inspiration and benefit of the American people.' The Act of 1966 purposes 'to establish a program for the preservation of additional historic properties throughout the Nation...as a living part of our community life and development...' Clearly... the Act of 1966 was meant to extend beyond properties of national significance to include those important at the state and community level. Historic buildings were now to be preserved and restored not only for their educational value as museum exhibits, but also for their continued practical use and lasting importance in our daily lives (Connally, 1986).

Part of the 1966 legislation's intent was enabling the establishment of local preservation commissions (LPC) with the power to create local historic districts and make individual historic building designations. Historic districting "reflected a desire of cities to avoid the excesses of urban renewal and, particularly, to check unrestrained private development that could disrupt the scale, intimacy, and charm of settled, familiar places" (Connally, 1986). Districts can also be a "part of the tactical arsenal available to residents as they struggle to retain a modicum of control over the character of their neighborhoods" (Verrey & Henley, 1991) and, alternatively, a tool used by city agencies to exact top-down control over neighborhood design (Reichl, 1997). From the start, NHPA was both a mechanism of control and protection.

However, limited federal funding and discouraging tax policies prevented a groundswell of preservation ordinances and designations until the passage of the 1976 Tax Reform Act which created the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HRTC). While the 1986 Tax Reform Act reduced the Rehabilitation Tax Credit benefits it is still one of the most

influential policies promoting heritage conservation in the urban core. Moreover, the tax credit in combination with the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (part of the Tax reform Act of 1986) has helped to rehabilitate tens of thousands of units. Nearly one fifth of all housing rehabilitated under the HRTC is low and moderate-income housing (Listokin, Listokin, & Lahr, 1998).

The synthesis between heritage conservation and sociocultural sustainability is further enhanced by the extended economic benefits of rehabilitation projects. According to Gilderbloom (2009) and dozens of other studies⁶, rehabilitation produces more jobs than new construction; anywhere from 36-49 for every \$1 million expended. According to the most recent report on the subject, the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit produces 108 jobs for every \$1 million expended (The Historic Tax Credit Coalition, 2010). Further, heritage conservation jobs tend to employ more local labor, use more local resources, and are generally more sustainable than new construction programs (Rypkema D. , 2008).

Coinciding with the development and growth of the HRTC was the Main Street program. Main Street is a community revitalization program developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (founded in 1949) in the late 1970s. The core of the Main Street philosophy is the preservation of the historic built environment through the “4-point” approach of Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring, which are

⁶ For a review of the scholarship linking heritage conservation to economic factors see Mason, 2005, *Economics and Historic Preservation*.

intended to “work together to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort.”⁷ Primarily an economic tool, Main Street has the capability to expand in scope to incorporate a complete sustainable redevelopment program, the seedlings of which are already beginning to appear.

The Main Street Center has published selected statistics from Main Street programs since 1980. These include dollars invested, net gain in businesses, net gain in jobs, number of building rehabilitations, and the reinvestment ratio. The numbers are impressive but tell us little about the comparative success of the program versus non-conservation-based programs and even less about the extended sociocultural benefits of the conservation efforts.

Over the past three decades, heritage conservation has formalized as a distinct field of practice, connected to architecture and planning, but with its own set of principles and practices. This began largely with the creation of advanced degree programs in the late-1970s and early-1980s. This professionalization has furthered a scientific approach that has enabled introspective study, research that has led to evidence of conservation as an economic generator, an environmentally *green* approach and an effective sociocultural policy regarding the built environment.

In recent years, in an increasingly international arena, heritage conservation has come to understand and engage the less-tangible aspects of history, such as the concept of *place*

⁷ <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/>

discussed in the Burra Charter. Though the language of the intangible has always been a part of heritage conservation, these sociocultural elements are only now being integrated into the new values-based approaches.

With the widespread acceptance of heritage conservation in public policy – there are nearly 14,000 National Historic Districts, 85,000 National Historic Places, and 2,300 local historic district commissions representing over 3 million historic structures⁸ - it is a wonder that the narrow views of conservation continues to persist:

Two popular views of historic preservation are incomplete. It has been suggested that American historic preservation is inspired by an uncritical nostalgic longing for a golden age. If it were, the typical historic district would be a period restoration that tried to recreate a lost landscape. Few actually are. It has also been suggested that historic preservation is only a real-estate gimmick-a way of making gentrification seem public spirited. Preservation has been used for that purpose, but it has been applied to many other circumstances... Old buildings and actions required to preserve them help to reduce isolation from the past and the future, an isolation that is at the core of modern daily life (Datel, 1985).

It is no coincidence that the modern preservation movement in the United States emerged side-by-side with the environmental and civil rights movements. Heritage conservation is increasingly seen as a means of empowerment for communities and a way to protect valued resources from the actions of government and large-scale, unrestrained development. Most importantly, heritage conservation is seen as a way to protect community identity rather than solely a means of enhancing national identity.

⁸ According to the National Park Service and data collected by Listokin et al (1998).

Chapter 3 – Gentrification

The term *gentrification* was coined in 1964 when Ruth Glass wrote about the demographic shift taking place in some of London's working-class neighborhoods:

One by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages- two rooms up and two down-have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences... Once this process of "gentrification" starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed (Glass, 1964)

Gentrification is produced by two interrelated processes: the class-based recolonization of residential neighborhoods and a reinvestment in the physical building stock (Atkinson, 2003). The resultant increases in housing values and rents leads to the displacement of some current residents, often renters and those with low cash flow (i.e. the elderly and unemployed), and the exclusion of new low-income households. Thus, the neighborhood changes from a lower-class to a higher-class use with businesses and services following suit. Ultimately, the preexisting social and cultural systems of the neighborhood are replaced by new ones. The loss of residents and of familiar social and cultural systems is at the core of the gentrification issue. The high visibility of physical upgrading and in some cases, of heritage conservation within the process of gentrification makes it difficult to disentangle from the negative sociocultural side effects of displacement and loss of character.

EFFECTS OF GENTRIFICATION

The crucial point about gentrification is that it involves not only a social change but also, at the neighborhood scale, a physical change in the housing stock and an economic change in the land and housing market. It is this combination of social, physical, and economic change that distinguishes gentrification as an identifiable process/set of processes (Smith, 1987).

Far from being a completely negative process, gentrification can bring with it several positive outcomes: reinvestment, increased levels of home ownership, improved public services, improved commercial activities, renovation of vacant and abandoned properties, adaptive use of “white elephant” structures, increased property tax, sales tax, and income tax revenues, neighborhood jobs, property value appreciation, and economic integration (Rypkema D. D., 2004). Yet it is the negative outcomes that make gentrification such a polarizing topic; rising housing costs, changes in the human character of the neighborhood, loss of a sense of “power” and “ownership” by long-term residents, and potential conflicts between new residents and long-term residents (Rypkema D. D., 2004).

There is debate among scholars over whether gentrification is a “net positive” process or if that view represents a “tyranny of the statistical majority” (Newman & Wyly, 2006). A sophisticated understanding of the distribution of the costs and benefits is needed in order to determine how gentrification affects different segments of society. For the cities in which gentrification occurs, the reinvestment in neighborhoods brings substantial benefits with minimal costs; increased tax base, new investment, and a better image contrasted with minimal relocation costs. For incoming residents gentrification affords them relatively

cheaper housing in a desirable neighborhood close to their workplace. For pre-existing homeowners, gentrification offers the possibility of substantial profits from the sale of their house but this often comes with a feeling of regret at leaving their old neighborhood behind. For non-home owning residents, gentrification threatens their way of life. Increasing costs and changes in the social and cultural character of the neighborhood inflame the passions of many long-time residents. However, enhancements in neighborhood safety, services and amenities are often regarded as acceptable tradeoffs for the increased costs and changes in character. For some residents gentrification leads to displacement due to unmanageable increases in housing costs; though a statistically small group, the displaced have become central to the gentrification debate.

CAUSAL MODELS OF GENTRIFICATION

Early efforts to understand gentrification began in earnest in the mid-1970s through the mid-to-late-1980s. In an analysis of these studies London, et al. (1986) organize the explanatory factors into several categories; demographic, ecological, sociological, and political-economic. Demographic factors include the change in population compositions that lead to resettlement of inner-city neighborhoods; aspects like the “unprecedented number of young adults” coming to age in the baby boom generation. Other aspects include populations that are waiting longer to marry and have children, more women in the work-

force, and an increased number of dual-wage households. These demographic trends create a greater number of risk-tolerant pioneers willing to settle in transitional neighborhoods (Schaffer & Smith, 1986).

Gentrification's ecological causes stem from land-use changes from manufacturing to white-collar, technology-based industry. The implication is that as heavy industry is decentralized, the central business district shifts its focus to white collar labor which in turn attracts new residents to the inner-city residential ring, previously housing the working-class labor force dependant on the now-absent factories.

The sociological explanation posits that a greater number of the population is shifting from a rural ideal to a pro-urban mentality. These urbanites move into the city (or, as the case may be, move within the city) seeking the cultural and recreational amenities associated with city life. London, et al. (1986), propose that the restoration of historic buildings falls under this sociological factor, as it may represent an act of self-expression or be a part of larger nostalgic national trends (such as the 1976 Bicentennial).

The political-economic factor of gentrification is the most widely debated area of scholarship. It centers on issues of supply-and-demand, market efficiency, and the distribution of costs and benefits. Traditionalists view factors such as rising housing costs, rising transportation costs, availability of urban land, and desegregation as determinants of gentrification. The Marxist camp views the political-economic factors as being intentionally

produced, or, at the least, impossible to avoid; policies of neglect and disinvestment that lead to blight and ultimately to clearance and renewal.

According to Neil Smith, the person most associated with the Marxist camp, the process of devalorization happens through “the movement of capital from the cities to the suburbs; the shift towards a higher level of rental property; potential blockbusting which occurs when real estate professionals purchase homes at a low cost and then sell them to minorities at a substantial markup; redlining which occurs when private banks and funding institutions cease to provide mortgages to individuals living in certain neighborhoods; and the abandonment of inner city dwellings”. (Smith, 1996)

The result of this is what Smith calls the ‘rent gap’, the difference between “the actual capitalized ground rent of a plot of land given its present use and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned under a ‘higher and better’ use” (Smith, 1987). “When this gap grows sufficiently large, rehabilitation (or for that matter, renewal) can begin to challenge the rates of return available elsewhere and capital flows back” (Smith, 1979).

Ultimately, several conditions come together to produce gentrification; within the neighborhood, a tight housing market with the conditions outlined in Smith’s arguments; within the city’s commercial district, an increase in job growth; outside of the city core, an increase in traffic and congestion (or a general reduction in quality of life); within the policy arena, tax incentives and revitalization programs; and within the social arena, a renewed

preference for urban amenities (Kennedy & Leonard, 2001). Hamnett simplifies the conditions further, breaking the causes of gentrification into three criteria; supply of *gentrifiable* property, supply of potential *gentrifiers*, and demand for inner-city living (Hamnett, The Blind Men and the Elephant: The Explanation of Gentrification, 1991).

Different degrees of each criterion will result in a different sort of change; the building stock changes, the people change, and the sense of place changes – these changes do not necessarily always lead to gentrification. This may occur according to cyclic process of urban succession (White, 1984), the more-or-less predictable replacement of one community with another – whether speaking in ecological, sociological or economic terms.

Part of this process of change can be explained through an examination of the shift in the modes of production in a city and the increasing availability of suburban living. Beginning with the development of light rail and followed by the automobile, suburban life became a reality to more and more people who could afford it. Cheaper property and ease of access not only attracted white-collar residents, it also attracted industry. As industry left cities for suburbs, so too did the majority of the employable working-class population and their families. In their places, came successive waves of *in-migrant* populations that took advantage of the surplus of affordable housing, much of it only available as rentals. However, the continued loss of employers, lack of new investment, racist housing policies, and

macroeconomic troubles took their toll on cities; populations continued to decline and neighborhoods deteriorated.

On a very small scale, middle-class urban ‘pioneers’ looking for distinctive neighborhoods close to the central business district began to move in to these deteriorated neighborhoods - finding affordable housing, urban amenities, and distinctive building stock. City governments also began to use planning tools to re-imagine their policies and reshape the urban landscape, often in the shape of urban renewal and slum clearance schemes. Schaffer and Smith (1986) point out, however, that the processes behind gentrification have been noted since the 19th century; alternatively called ‘the improvements’ by the English or *embourgeoisement* in response to Haussmann’s plan for Paris (1852-1870).

Throughout the latter-half of the 20th century, cities have worked desperately to revive their cores, using a multitude of policies and tools. Urban resettlement, however, still plays a proportionately small role in overall urban population patterns that have been consistently declining since the 1950s – while suburban areas have conversely increased in population. Only in the most recent urban demographic data analyses have urban population declines shown a slowdown and in a few cases a reverse⁹.

Dennis Gale (1980), exploring further the prior work of Phillip Clay (1979), suggests that this “resettlement” of neighborhoods occurs in stages rather than being specific to the

⁹ See, for example, recent census data for Washington DC and Philadelphia located in the appendices.

latter half of the 20th century. In stage one, “a few ‘risk-oblivious’ households purchase older housing.” In stage two, “the local media and a few real estate concerns ‘discover’ the resettlement neighborhood” and “risk-prone” buyers move in. In stage three, after several years, a middle-class presence has been established and “risk-averse” buyers appear. This model can be applied to any gentrifying neighborhood at any given time – regardless of larger population movements. This totalizing ecological stage model is not unlike Smith’s totalizing political-economic model in which individuals and culture are given little agency over the forces at play in gentrification.

The most recent research has challenged traditional models by presenting several alternative forms of gentrification. These include marginal gentrification, upgrading, and incumbent upgrading. Marginal gentrification occurs when the incoming residents have more “cultural capital than economic capital”, resulting in a change in neighborhood character without the associated increase in income levels or property values. Upgrading refers to a change from middle-class to upper-class, much in the same way that traditional gentrification occurs. Incumbent upgrading occurs when long-term residents engage in an internal process of rehabilitation and revitalization with very little change in residents. Tourism gentrification (the conversion of housing to short-term ‘vacation’ rentals) and super-gentrification (the displacement of the middle- and upper-classes by the ultra-wealthy) have also been discussed (Bures & Cain, 2008).

SIGNIFICANCE AND EXTENT OF GENTRIFICATION

The many different causal models for gentrification and the several alternative forms presented in recent scholarship tend to muddy the intellectual waters surrounding the already complex issue. They also illustrate how the physical rehabilitation of neighborhoods can result in several different scenarios that do not necessarily lead to displacement or drastic sociocultural change. In fact, a recent study done by Lance Freeman and Frank Braconi (2004) in New York indicates that large scale displacement may not actually occur any more in 'gentrifying' neighborhoods than other neighborhoods. Another recent study, published by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), found that not only were long-term residents *not* moving out of 'gentrifying' neighborhoods, they were experiencing widespread increases in income (McKinnish, Walsh, & White, 2008). However, another study found that while low-income households were not more likely to move from gentrifying neighborhoods they did experience an increase in housing costs without an increase in income (Vigdor, Massey, & Rivlin, 2002).

Several studies have shown that on average urban populations move once every five to seven years (or 15-20% of the urban population moves every year). Of these, in gentrifying neighborhoods, about 23% of the outmovers would fall into the category of

displacement depending on how that term is defined¹⁰ and only 17% of those are adversely affected (Schill & Nathan, 1983). That means in a neighborhood of 10,000 one can expect on average 1,500 to 2,000 people to move in or out each year with about 400 of those people having been displaced and less than 100 worse off. Schill and Nathan's results have been heavily criticized for their restricted definition of gentrification and an insufficient methodology, yet there are few other studies that have attempted to quantify displacement to this extent and those that do have not had markedly different results.¹¹

In another study, Jacob Vigdor (2002) asks "does gentrification harm the poor?" After a very thorough analysis he concludes that there is not one outcome but several caused by two separate mechanisms. In one scenario, the poor are adversely affected by larger changes in income distribution and property values. In the other scenario, as some inner city neighborhoods become desirable and more people move in, the current poor residents must make a rational decision to move and accept the cost of relocating, but perhaps enjoy better housing elsewhere, or stay and accept the increased costs (economic and cultural), but enjoy better services and opportunities. Hamnett even concludes that displacement and sociocultural change take place "largely as a result of long-term industrial and occupational change, not of gentrification per se" (Hamnett, 2003). Research continues to show that

¹⁰ Peter Marcuse goes so far as to say that displacement can be preemptive, whereby "housing opportunities of lower-income households are restricted", forcing these residents to look elsewhere for housing, producing what he calls 'exclusionary displacement' (Marcuse, 1986).

¹¹ For the criticism of Schill and Nathan see Smith and DeBres (1984). Other studies quantifying displacement include Newman & Wyly (2006), Freeman and Braconi (2004), Vigdor (2002) and Freeman (2005).

gentrification is neither a continually progressive process nor that it has a single outcome or end-point (Gotham, 2005).

Ultimately, gentrification plays a small role in the ebb and flow of neighborhood social and cultural life. However, the forces behind gentrification (housing markets, demographics, and sociocultural trends) can result in an imbalance of costs and benefits that harms the least advantaged in a community while rewarding those able to take advantage of the changes. These forces also play a role in the conservation of the historic built environment and can result in the loss of some buildings and the rehabilitation of others. It is important to understand the role conservation can play in mitigating these negative effects for both a community and their buildings.

Chapter 4 – A Review of the Literature on Heritage

Conservation's Role in Gentrification

Schaffer and Smith (1986) state that “in different locations gentrification takes different forms, but the common thread is the renovation of old inner and central city building stock for new uses, generally associated with the middle class”. The gentrification process presupposes a deteriorated state; the divestment that leads to the supply-side causal factors of gentrification (high vacancy and rental rates, declining property values, etc.) leads to the physical deterioration of buildings. To prevent the continued deterioration or total loss of these buildings there needs to be a certain amount of building investment. Heritage conservation is one result of new investment; other results of new investment are demolition and replacement, ‘incumbent upgrading’, and rehabilitation or renovation. Critics of heritage conservation see it as a tool used by gentrifiers to achieve an idealized aesthetic, contrary to a more “authentic” cycle of deterioration and incumbent upgrading.

Sharon Zukin states that “the ideology of historic preservation facilitates the removal of a pre-gentrification population, especially those residents whose modernization of their homes is incongruous with the spirit of authenticity in the gentrifiers' own restoration”. She suggests that historic preservation is used as a tool “to constitute a new urban middle-class”, suggesting a causal relationship between preservation and gentrification. Though they would most likely disagree with Zukin concerning the motives of heritage conservation, Listokin et

al (1998) have found, through a survey of several studies, that early preservation efforts have indeed resulted in gentrification and in some cases displacement of lower-class residents. These studies focused on pre-1980 census data from Society Hill in Philadelphia, Georgetown in Washington DC, and several neighborhoods in Chicago and New Orleans. Listokin et al do also recognize the “many instances of historic areas that are largely made up of less-advantaged and minority residents” (noting Savannah, GA; Pittsburgh, PA; and Cocoa, FL) and that “over the past two decades, preservationists have done yeoman’s work in trying to reduce displacement pressures” (Listokin, Listokin, & Lahr, 1998).

Zukin ultimately dismisses the historic built environment’s role in the process of gentrification by stating; “gentrifiers’ tastes are conditioned by the availability and affordability of older buildings. Their aesthetic tastes may be diverted by either new construction in an older mode... or newer, old building styles” (Zukin, *Gentrification: Culture and Capital in the Urban Core*, 1987). Other studies suggest, however, that there is a strong correlation between gentrification (defined without the precondition of displacement) and historic neighborhoods. London et al. considered the number of residential historic districts in each city listed on the National Register of Historic Places (per 100,000 people) and found that gentrification is likely to exist when, among several other factors, there is a high ‘historic preservation effort’ (London, Lee, & Lipton, 1986). Dennis Gale found that architectural/historical value was one of four conditions that appealed most to neighborhood “resettlers” (Gale, 1979). Laska, et al. (1982) found that inclusion in and

proximity to a historic district was a good predictor of renovation in New Orleans and one of the earliest studies on the subject, by T.J. Black in 1975, found that an overwhelming majority of “private-market housing renovations” were selected because of the historic fabric of the neighborhoods (Black, 1975).

Other studies have looked specifically at the process of historic district designation and its relationship to rapid neighborhood change. Coulson and Leichenko (2004) found that in Fort Worth, Texas there was “no evidence that preservation efforts altered the demographic composition of neighbourhoods”. They did note that historically designated areas started out with slightly worse “neighbourhood indicators” than those without designation and that there was an associated increase in property values, but their evidence did not support claims that designation leads to gentrification (Coulson & Leichenko, 2004). A similar study by Eric Allison in New York City confirms this finding (Allison, 2005). Coulson and Leichenko’s study considered both national and local district and individual designation, whereas Allison only considered local district designation.

Although some studies have been inconclusive in making the correlation between historic preservation and rapid sociocultural change, many other studies have shown a positive correlation between location in a historic district and a greater increase in property value versus comparable neighborhoods not in historic districts (Ford 1989, Rypkema 1994, Shipley 2000, Leichenko, et al. (2001), Coulson and Lahr 2005, Mason 2005, Gilderbloom

2008, Gilderbloom et al. 2008, Gilderbloom, Hanka, & Ambrosius, 2009). It should be noted, however, that studies have been inconclusive in showing a causal relationship between historic district *designation* and a relative increase in property values. Also, studies by Freeman (2005) and NBER (2008) suggest the increase in property value is often associated with a correlated increase in incomes for long-term and new residents alike.

Dennis Kasinitz connects historic districting to increased costs thrust upon poor residents, relating it to a series of “tactics” used by the gentrifiers (Kasinitz, 1988). The argument is that “for such persons [with capital] the restoration of the old is either a desirable end in itself or at the very least a shrewd investment. For the poor, however, the situation is far different. If their home is both architecturally and historically important and in need of major repairs, they cannot in most cities tear it down to replace it with a modern structure and they cannot, for lack of capital and lack of skills, restore it. The result is that they eventually sell and leave the area” (Tournier, 1980). Alternatively, David Goldfield argues that the rehabilitation of buildings threatened by “poverty and disinvestment” is more a choice between saving valuable housing stock and losing it altogether (Goldfield, 1980). The cost of tearing down a deteriorating historic building and rebuilding, even in the cheapest fashion, is significantly more than the cost of deferring maintenance and the resultant ordinance violation fees (Rypkema D. D., 2002). There are no doubt costs associated with living in a historic district, but as Freeman (2005) and Gale (1991) both point out, these costs rarely are significant enough to displace long-term residents.

There does indeed seem to be a relationship in the scholarly literature between gentrification and heritage conservation; historically and architecturally significant buildings and neighborhoods are more likely to receive in-moving populations. These same buildings and neighborhoods are also the focus of heritage conservation programs. Therefore, the relationship between gentrification and heritage conservation exists in the coincidence of historic architecture, whether it is to physically occupy or simply to conserve them.

The desirability of these places preexists any historic designation, “It is not the historic designation that makes it a great neighborhood; it’s already great” (Rypkema D. D., 2003). This suggests that certain gentrification pressures may be inevitable in neighborhoods that exhibit historically significant architecture. That is not to say, however, that gentrification itself is inevitable.

Questions still exist as to how costly neighborhood designation is to residents, exemplified in real actualized costs like rents or permits, perceived costs like possible reductions in value from district restrictions, or future costs like increased taxes due to appreciation. The most useful research would be in the form of a lengthy study comparing similar neighborhoods exhibiting gentrification pressures, where heritage conservation tools are used in some and alternative strategies used in others. Data could be used to assess the ability of the various tools to mitigate the negative effects of gentrification.

In the meantime, more empirical research on how heritage conservation is used at the neighborhood level to combat gentrification pressures is needed. Additionally, better promotion and visibility of the cases like this that do exist would go a long way in encouraging research from both scholarly camps.

Chapter 5 – Methodology

This thesis engages the explanatory case study to provide three examples of how heritage conservation tools are used to enhance or restore sociocultural sustainability to urban neighborhoods subject to gentrification pressures. Explanatory “case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (Yin 1989).

Gentrification is a complex process that plays out over a long period of time and involves a large number of people. It is inherently about people, but also about the places they inhabit. It is necessary then, to use case studies to illustrate the actualized processes and results of gentrification, to supplement the wide body of scholarship and speculative literature. Case studies provide the needed empirical research to support a scientific hypothesis.

This thesis asks a question about how heritage conservation may, or may not, work in relation to larger sociocultural processes. Case studies provide a temporal and spatial framework within which the researcher compares and contrasts results, analyzes approaches, and draws conclusions from often dissimilar scenarios. Working within the constraints of a case study the researcher must accept all factors that support or deny their hypothesis. In this way the case study is the most appropriate research tools for this thesis.

Society Hill, East Austin, and Shaw are all older neighborhoods that, prior to experiencing gentrification pressures, were predominantly lower-class, physically deteriorated, and mixed use. East Austin and Shaw both emerged in the late 19th century as ethnic enclaves and working class areas within largely segregated cities. Though Society Hill was originally founded by a wealthier merchant class, by the late-1800s it too was a predominantly working class neighborhood. All three case studies experienced widespread decline and depopulation as more residents fled to the suburbs.

Gentrification is present in all three cases when using the Brookings Institute gentrification indicators framework (Kennedy & Leonard, 2001);

- high rate of renters;
- ease of access to job centers (new subway stations, walkable, access to freeways, etc.);
- high architectural value;
- comparatively low housing values;
- influx of households and individuals interested in specifically urban amenities and cultural niches (e.g., artists, young professionals, gay/lesbian households); and
- influx of amenities that serve higher income levels, for instance music clubs and galleries, valet parking, new Starbucks locations, etc.

Additionally, all three case studies have had well documented heritage conservation tools proposed and applied.

Name	Society Hill	East Austin	Shaw
Founding	Late-17 th century	Late-19 th century	Late-19 th century to early-20 th century
Pre-gentrification Physical Fabric	Predominantly converted boarding houses and multi-family dwellings. Late-19 th century industrial buildings.	Smaller vernacular housing on quarter-acre lots. Victorian and Second Empire influences.	A variety of two, three and four-story rows ranging in stylistic influences
Pre-gentrification population	Mostly white working-class population.	Predominantly African American	Predominantly African American
Pre-gentrification Housing	15% vacant. About 75% rental rate.	12-15% vacant. Over 90% rental rate.	18% vacant. About 80% rental rate.
Primary gentrification period	1955-1970	1990-present	1980s-present
Heritage conservation trigger	Rehabilitation and reconstruction-based urban renewal plan	Proposal of local historic districts, individual designations and rehabilitations	Existing historic districts (district expansion proposal and promotion of heritage tourism)
Heritage conservation body	Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, Society Hill Civic Association	City of Austin	Manna CDC, DC Office of Planning

Possible case studies were further narrowed down by the availability of gentrification research. The three cases presented here have each been the subject of gentrification studies: Society Hill is one of the most widely referenced heritage conservation/gentrification cases available, East Austin was the subject of a city-initiated task force on gentrification, and Shaw has been the subject of several scholarly reports on gentrification.

A note about race: Though race does not expressly factor into the definition of gentrification it is commonly one of the most visible features of the changing human environment. In East Austin, PODER, an outspoken activist group, felt that race was an important factor in gentrification. They insisted that whites were moving in and pushing out minorities. What was discovered instead was that blacks had been moving out of the area for years and that it was a Hispanic population moving in. Race was not the determining factor in the way PODER expected and it rarely is. However, it is easy to asses demographic changes based on race and it serves as a decent illustrative tool. Therefore, the case studies presented here will use race as one way out of several to demonstrate neighborhood change and sociocultural sustainability.

Importantly, the case study methodology provides a repeatable approach that can either be independently confirmed or applied to additional case studies to bolster the conclusions drawn here. The largest constraint of case studies, in addition to the logistical constraints of the researcher, is the availability of data. Because the case studies presented here are time dependant, data that was not collected at the onset of the study period may be lost forever. In fact, one of the conditions for choosing the three case studies in this thesis was the availability of a wide set of data from multiple sources. The single most important

recommendation for future research is to encourage more thorough sociocultural data collection to enable more case study analyses like this one.

Other possible cases that met most of these criteria were Savannah's Victorian district and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District mentioned in the introduction to this thesis; several neighborhood's in New York City including Jackson Heights, Boerum Hill, Harlem, Fort Greene and Park Slope; and Spring Garden in Philadelphia. These neighborhoods did not meet enough of the methodology criteria however and most did not have adequate scholarly research on the development of their heritage conservation programs or of the process of gentrification.

For both scholars of gentrification and heritage conservation a common pitfall is the reliance on anecdotal evidence to draw definitive conclusions. It is not the intention of this thesis to draw from these three case studies an absolute connection between heritage conservation and sociocultural sustainability. Rather, the intention is to demonstrate that heritage conservation *can be* and *is* used to mitigate the negative effects of gentrification and that more research needs to be done to effectively show this.

Chapter 6 – Case Studies

Society Hill, Philadelphia, PA

Orchestrated by noted city planner Edmund Bacon, Society Hill's resurrection came at a social cost not fully recognized in its day. Though many buildings were restored to meticulous standards, many more were rebuilt with historically themed facades or torn down to be replaced with buildings meant to be sensitive to a Colonial aesthetic. Though many in Philadelphia consider Society Hill an economic and branding success story, displaced residents were given little consideration and the late-19th, early-20th century story of the neighborhood has largely been forgotten. Heritage conservation was used to encourage gentrification, though the underlying city-led interventions had more to do with urban renewal than with a concern for historic authenticity. In retrospect the renewal failed in many ways, however, today's Society Hill is exactly what planners intended, an upscale residential neighborhood that feeds into the central business district, replete with colonial charm and modern amenities.

Society Hill takes its name from the Society of Free Traders who purchased land in Philadelphia in the late 17th century. A small hill near Front and Spruce Streets became known as the Society's hill. The area grew gradually, with commerce located along the

Delaware River and associated residential areas inland. Throughout the 18th and into the 19th centuries the hill was home to the cities mercantile elite and became a center of cultural and intellectual activity (Pace, 1976).

Studies of class structure in the Society Hill area by Norman Johnston indicate a racially and economically mixed neighborhood in the early- and mid-1800s (Johnston, 1966). Intra-neighborhood segregation existed and was generally dictated by the spatial arrangements of the Penn and Holmes plan for Philadelphia. That is, the prominent streets like Walnut, Spruce, or Pine housed the more affluent, whereas smaller streets like Addison or Delancey housed the middle classes and alleys housed the lowest classes. The small black population within the Society Hill area was located between Fourth and Fifth Streets and Walnut and Delancey (see Image A 1). Johnston notes in his study that as the neighborhood grew, shifts in the population occurred and as wealthier classes came to occupy or re-occupy neighborhoods they would upgrade the housing; “the process of private rehabilitation is no recent phenomenon” (Johnston, 1966, pp. 349).

The limitations on the ability to travel, regardless of class, forced a level of diversity in neighborhoods; residents needed to be near their businesses and institutions which likewise needed to be near their patrons and suppliers (e.g. the ports of the Delaware River). As transportation improved, those who could afford it moved west within Philadelphia, replaced by mostly lower class European immigrants. Between 1860 and 1930 the economic

segregation of Society Hill became more pronounced. This could be considered the second stage of urban change for the area. Many single family residences were converted to multiple family residences or boardinghouses and small industry moved west to Third Street (Pace, 1976, pp. 86). “The influx of immigrants, increasing suburbanization, the Depression, two wars and sixty-seven years of Republican machine politics had taken its toll on Philadelphia’s center city by the 1950’s” (Pace, 1976, pp. 93). The area began to decline slowly, forming its third stage of urban change, as more residents moved out (of the neighborhood and the city) and housing deteriorated. Possibly the first signs of interest in the area’s architecture came in 1931, in the typical early American preservation movement way, when a group of wealthy society women successfully organized to save the Powel House from demolition¹².

“The deterioration of the center city and the housing shortage after World War II, and the solidity of the old structures in Society Hill made it possible, as well as desirable, to solve both the societal need for housing and a psychic need for historical roots” (Pace, 1976, pp. 92). In 1949 the Federal Government passed the National Housing Act which authorized federal money for urban redevelopment. Several areas in Philadelphia had already been blight certified and after numerous challenges, the process had eventually been established within the rights of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (RDA). Redlining made it almost impossible for private citizens to purchase and rehabilitate homes in blighted

¹² Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks; http://www.philalandmarks.org/powel_history.aspx
Accessed March 12, 2010.

areas so early efforts by social reformers focused on assisting lower-income homeowners in their rehabilitation work (Pace, 1976, pp. 100). This effort was not enough to jumpstart the neighborhood's revitalization and it became apparent that a larger, comprehensive plan was needed. An emerging group of young, prominent, reform-minded Philadelphians formed, calling themselves the "Young Turks". They were "convinced of the promise of comprehensive city planning" and had lobbied hard to increase the power of the Planning Commission (Cybriwsky, Ley, & Western, 1986). Much of the work done in planning in Philadelphia at this time was headed by "Young Turks" member and visionary urban planner Edmund Bacon.

For Society Hill, the master plan came about in 1957 with the Washington Square East Redevelopment Plan. With very little precedent the plan intended to preserve as many of the old buildings as was reasonable, provide new housing, rezone where appropriate for larger, denser commercial and institutional uses, and plan for modern traffic and parking. The language of the plan in regards to rehabilitation was exceptional for its time,

"houses selected for rehabilitation should be those which contribute to the historical and aesthetic character of the streets and neighborhood. This does not mean that they must be dated within narrow brackets or be exemplary of a closely defined sub-style! Every city is, and has always been, a living, growing and changing organism." (Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, 1959).

For the implementation of the plan Society Hill was divided into four units (Map A 2). Unit I was blanket condemned in 1959. Homeowners who wished to stay had to repurchase their properties under agreements to rehabilitate them according to the new

codes. Public distress caused the RDA to rethink blanket condemnation for the remainder of the units. Recognizing the efforts of individuals who had voluntarily rehabilitated over 200 properties in Unit II, the RDA began to exclude certain properties from condemnation. Provisions were made for a second condemnation for properties that did not meet the plan's standards within three years, but surprisingly this only affected 13 properties (Pace, 1976, pp. 120). Units III and IV, followed with much less scrutiny and over a broader span of time. Ultimately, these areas were to act as a physical and demographic buffer to Units I and II.

The Redevelopment Authority was not the only organization working to revive Society Hill. In 1958 The Society Hill Area Residents Association (SHARA) was formed. SHARA "was primarily the organization of those who lived in Society Hill before the redevelopment programs of the late 1950s and early 1960s had taken place. Its membership was restricted to persons who owned and occupied single family houses"¹³. According to Pace (1976, pp. 139) SHARA was composed of "the people who were concerned with the historic aspects of Society Hill". The group merged with a newer group, the Home Owners Residents Association in 1965 and became the Society Hill Civic Association. "The members of the two associations were a bit wary of each other. However, the gap between the old-timers and the new-comers was neither universal nor serious; it was primarily the result of

¹³ From the Society Hill Civic Association's website. Retrieved from <http://www.societyhillcivic.com/aboutSHCA/history.asp> February 12, 2010

somewhat different agendas. In late 1964 and early 1965 growing sentiment in the neighborhood looked with favor upon the merger of the two associations. The members of the two groups were coming to know each other better and to recognize that they faced common issues”¹⁴. One of the primary reasons for the merger was the threat coming from the development of Interstate 95 and the waterfront, state and federal initiative piggybacking on the redevelopment plan.

One of the most intense issues taken on by SHCA was the attempted creation of low-income housing for residents who were to be displaced by the redevelopment efforts. The SHCA took up the cause of several families who were under eviction notice from a formerly low-income housing development on Lombard Street. A not-for-profit called Benezet Court was incorporated under the charge of creating 19 low-income housing units in the neighborhood using federal funds. However, opposition in the community stalled the process and the subsequent elimination of the federal funding program nearly sunk it. Years of community conflict and litigation alienated the original low-income residents, roughly 21 families, who eventually left the neighborhood, never to return (Pace 1976, pp.147, The Society Hill Civic Association, 1973).

Working closely with the RDA, the Philadelphia Historical Commission (created in 1955) was also involved in Society Hill’s renewal and engaged in an extensive historic building survey in 1958. The area was eventually listed on the National Register of Historic

¹⁴ *ibid*

Places in 1971, though later in 1987 the district area was reduced (Image A 3). The district was also simultaneously listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, which affords the neighborhood a higher level of protection than the National Register listing. The PHC was responsible for designing the rehabilitation standards and identifying which buildings were to be saved. They are still active in Society Hill, recently publishing updated design guidelines for the district.

From the 1940, 1950, and 1960 census tables for Society Hill, located predominantly within census tract 10¹⁵, a familiar demographic change can be seen; black populations increased while the white population declined, a process commonly known as *white flight*. Far from being unique to the Society Hill area, this demographic change occurred regularly across Philadelphia and many other large Northeastern cities. In fact, these three data groups indicate that Society Hill was very characteristic of Philadelphia as a whole, with statistical proportions closely matching those of the entire Philadelphia County.

Census data shows a very clear picture of rapid sociocultural displacement between 1960 and 1970. Suddenly, in Society Hill in 1970, black populations accounted for only about six percent of the total, down from 20%, whereas in the rest of Philadelphia black populations increased to an average of around 33 percent. The rate of attendance at “some college or more” increased to 57 percent in Society Hill, while the rest of Philadelphia remained close to 12 percent. There was also a comparative increase in 25-35 year olds,

¹⁵ United States Census, Tract 10 for 1970 onwards, Tract 5A for 1960 and 501 for 1940 and 1950.

partially corroborating Ley's theories on the identity of *gentrifiers* as being younger, well-educated, middle-class urbanists. Additionally, the high vacancy rate of 1960 dropped from 13 percent to two percent in 1970.

Smith would be pleased to note that at least one of his production-side criteria has been ever present in Society Hill: extremely high rental rates. From the 1940 census to the 1970 census rental rates for the area averaged around 75%. Beginning with the 1990 census, however, Society Hill began to shift towards the Philadelphia norm of about 40% rentals to 60% owner-occupied housing. Additionally, between 1960 and 1970 over 1,000 additional housing units were registered – going from 1,600 to 2,600. The most recent estimates calculate the number of housing units at nearly 4,000.

Examining the data in another way, as quantities rather than percentiles, the picture becomes a bit clearer; total population counts for the tract were just above 7,000 in 1940. By 1950 overall population had declined to just below 7,000, though the black population nearly doubled from 700 to 1300. By 1960 the population in Society Hill had been cut in half, maintaining roughly the same racial proportions. By 1970 the white population increased by 1,000 to 4,500 and the black population lost over 300 residents with just over 300 remaining. By 1980 the Black population had again been cut in half while the white population was relatively stable. From 1980 to 2000, both black and white populations

increased, with blacks growing by 11 percent and whites growing by 7 percent – all while Philadelphia continued to lose population (another 10% loss from 1980 to 2000).

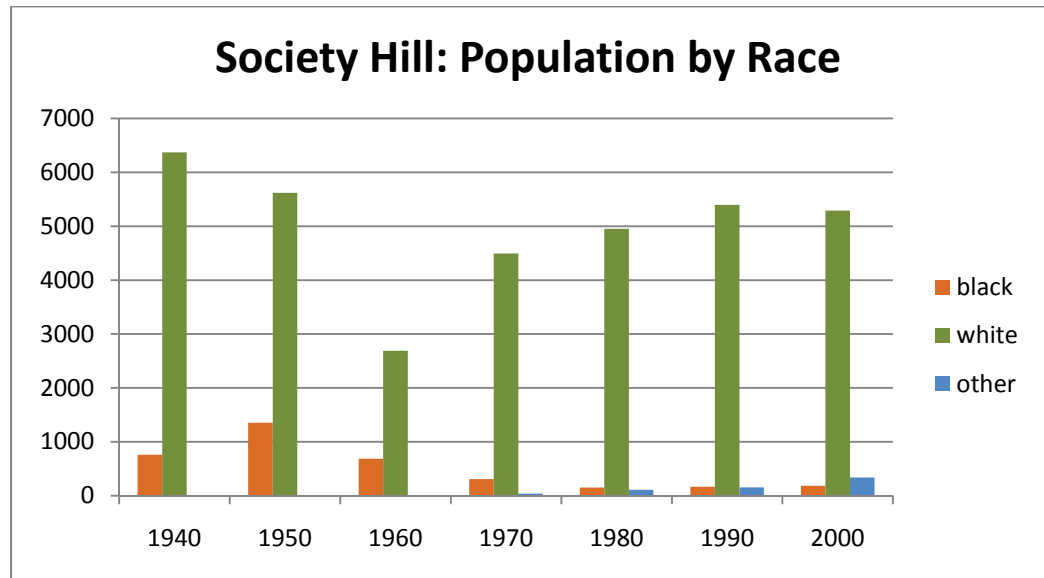


Figure 0-1 - Racial composition of Society Hill. U.S. Census data for census tract 10 retrieved from www.socialexplorer.com

Between 1940 and 1950 the Society Hill population over the age of 65 increased by over 150 residents. Between 1950 and 1960 the over-65 residents lost almost 250 members. And from 1960 on, the over-65 group has steadily increased.

Education and income/poverty metrics changed several times between the 1940 census and the 2000 census so it is difficult to draw definitive comparisons. Between 1950 and 1960 there was a significant but undetermined decrease in the number of poorest residents based on income levels: at least around 150 households and possibly as many as

300, this during the area's biggest population loss. The government began measuring poverty by the 1970 census and though the metrics changed several times since it seems that households below the poverty line have remained somewhat stable from 1970 to the present at around 300.

According to Pace (1976, pp. 136) data from HUD indicates that 112 families and individuals were relocated with assistance though, according to the RDAs own admission, accurate statistics are unavailable. Pace also notes that about one third of the residents who remained predated the renewal and that they accounted for about one third of the private rehabilitation. After passage of the 1964 housing act amendment, many of these residents became eligible for low interest loans.

We cannot determine through this data what became of the exiting population or how populations shifted within the tract. We do know that the most severe population losses occurred before the renewal plan was enacted in 1959 and the most significant increases occurred sometime between the 1960 census and the 1970 census, slowing down by the 1980 census. What we do know is that there is very little left in Society Hill that would suggest anything of the 19th and early-20th centuries.

From the census data one might also conclude that the renewal plan effectively halted the overall loss of population in Society Hill. It was, as Goldfield (1980) suggests, a choice between saving valuable inner-city housing stock and losing it altogether. Society Hill today

represents an achievement of the aims of the 1959 renewal plan: hundreds of buildings were preserved, rehabilitated, or restored, the number of housing units doubled, zoning was organized so that the area is now predominantly residential with small commercial corridors, and streets and parking have been updated and expanded to meet modern needs.

Society Hill all too often is used as *the* example of city-led heritage conservation programs used to gentrify neighborhoods. It is, in fact, the exception. More specifically, the fact that the RDA chose to use heritage conservation most likely played very little into the immediate effects of gentrification, if not actually preventing it in some case. In many other cities, urban renewal meant the wholesale removal of neighborhood populations and the condemnation and demolition of buildings. In Society Hill, some residents had the opportunity to remain in their buildings, provided they rehabilitate them to the appropriate standards. According to Pace (1976) this accounted for about one third of the preexisting residents, or in other words, the conservation-based program in Society Hill allowed for the retention of 33% of the neighborhood's residents (or nearly 1200 people).

At the time the plan was conceived cities all over America were hemorrhaging residents to the expanding suburbs. The overall urban planning ethos was literally engaged in renewal, making new vast urban areas to illicit residents back to the city. For the Society Hill plan to choose to conserve many of the neighborhood's buildings was nothing short of radical for the time. It is only in retrospect that the sociocultural failures of the plan seem to

outweigh the economic and conservation successes. Regardless, it begs the question, what would Society Hill be like today had the renewal plan *not* used a conservation strategy?

East Austin, Texas

East Austin sits on one side of a very real dividing line. Throughout the city's history that line, a north-south highway, has been the boundary between the wealthy white population and the diverse, but mostly minority population (Map A 4). In recent years gentrification has sparked concerns that wealthy whites are pushing out the minorities. One group claims that heritage conservation is one of the tools of the gentrifiers. However, a series of city-generated studies found that long time residents of East Austin were taking advantage of improved lifestyle choices and moving out to the suburbs while a new middle-class Hispanic population was moving in. The studies also found that heritage conservation is doing more to mitigate this process than to exacerbate it. Currently, more neighborhoods in East Austin are seeking designation and using other heritage conservation tools as a way to protect their communities from the negative effects of gentrification.

African American Austinites, especially after the Civil War, enjoyed a significant period of growth. However, by the turn of the century Jim Crow laws and the politics of

segregation diminished whatever achievements blacks had made (Humphrey, 1997). In 1928 the city devised a zoning plan meant to lighten the government's burden of having to create two of each public institution, one for whites and one for blacks. "There has been considerable talk in Austin, as well as other cities, in regard to the race segregation problem. This problem cannot be solved legally under any zoning law known to us at present... It is our recommendation that the nearest approach to the solution of the race segregation problem will be the recommendation of this district [East Austin] as a negro district." (A City Plan for Austin Texas, 1928). The plan also placed all industrial land use in East Austin, partly to put factories close to the homes of the people they would employ and certainly in part a racially motivated gesture.

At the time this district of "undesirables" was defined by East Avenue, a wide north-south boulevard that divides the city in two. In 1962, the division was enhanced with the construction of Interstate 35 on top of the Avenue. Today, I-35 continues to be a very real boundary between a predominantly white wealthier Austin to the west and a poorer minority Austin to the east (Image A 9 & A10).

However, this story is not entirely complete. Beginning during the Mexican Revolution of 1910, Mexican and later, Hispanic populations began to settle in East Austin, south of the African American Communities and just north of the Colorado River. This area

is known today as the Saltillo District while the predominantly African American community is known as Central East Austin (Map A 4).

In 1990, conditions in East Austin were ripe for gentrification, according to the Brookings Institute framework and the general consensus from studies on gentrification conducted by the city of Austin: about 57% renters¹⁶, easily accessed from the central business district (CBD), high architectural value¹⁷, and comparatively low housing values (about \$35,000 median compared to Austin's median of \$77,000). By 2000, there were some warning signs that gentrification might be occurring: median housing values increased by 60% and rents had doubled. In Central East Austin the black population had declined by 70% (from about 4,000 residents to 2,800). "East Austin neighborhoods, only a few blocks from a growing downtown and an enormous university, [were] increasingly seen as hip and funky—the place to go for entertainment, great food, and a cute, affordable house" (Chusid, 2006).

Though an influx of affluent, young, white in-movers had not occurred, the alarming increase in property values and rents and the drastic loss of a portion of the black population led one activist group to look for a scapegoat.

¹⁶ All data is from the US Census except where noted. Census data retrieved from Socialexplorer.com. East Austin is defined by census tracts 8.03, 8.04, and 9.01 (Central East Austin) and 9.02 and 10 (Saltillo).

¹⁷ The median age of housing in the area was about 30 years older than that of the City of Austin and according to the Austin task force on gentrification there is a "great potential" for historic designations in East Austin (City of Austin, 2003)

People in Defense of the Earth and Her Resources (PODER), a group of local activists formed in the mid-1990s to force the removal of a leaking gasoline tank farm endangering the health of East Austin residents, described an “influx of wealthy whites” who were “displacing the traditional black and Hispanic communities”. East Austin, they claimed, had been “marketed to affluent, largely Anglo, home buyers,” and growing real estate values, combined with the historic preservation and Smart Growth policies, had resulted in gentrification (Chusid, 2006).

PODER’s grassroots campaign against historic preservation got the attention of city officials and prompted the creation of a task force to study the connection between gentrification and the city’s historic preservation ordinances, the results of which were published in 2003 and are summarized in the following paragraphs.

The Austin Historic Landmarks Commission and historic preservation ordinance was established in 1974. According to the task force report, there were 47 individually designated properties in East Austin in 2003, one-third of which were minority-owned. There are also 14 National Historic Districts in Austin, two of which are located in East Austin (Map A 5). National Historic Districts in Austin voluntarily establish design guidelines and accept oversight from the Landmarks Commission, but are evaluated under less stringent criteria. At the time, individual buildings were evaluated under 13 criteria and were legally designated if they fulfilled just one of those. However, in practice a building usually had to fulfill a minimum of four of these criteria. Once a property is designated a historic landmark, the owner must apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Landmark Commission for approval of any non-routine exterior changes to the

property. The Commission reviews around 50 applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness annually (City of Austin, 2003).

In addition to the associated regulations and protection that come with designation, Historic Landmarks in Austin receive significant property tax exemption: 100% of the value of the improvements (building) and 50% the value of the land as well as exemption to the school district tax amounting to 50% of the value of the improvements and 25% the value of the land. Buildings in National Districts do not receive any local tax benefits. In 2002 only 28 of the 47 Historic Landmarks in East Austin applied for the tax exemptions. This may be partially due to the requirement that the property be in good repair and in compliance with the historic property program or a “general lack of knowledge, suspicion of governmental regulations, and language barriers” (City of Austin, 2003).

PODER was decrying that “the replacement of low income residents of communities of color with those of higher income whites” was leading to “urban removal”. PODER blamed a portion of this on the city’s historic preservation policy (Carlson, 2003). However, the gentrification task force was finding something very different. Not only were whites not displacing minorities in East Austin, between 1990 and 2000 white populations decreased by a small proportion while the Hispanic population enjoyed significant increases in all but the two National Historic District neighborhoods. Further, in the decade covered by the report,

income gains for Austin were near 26% and though most neighborhoods in East Austin shared in this prosperity, they did not as a whole outpace other parts of the city.

Black populations lost the most residents in these ten years, prompting a deeper analysis of the data. The report found that many African American residents were leaving the city for the suburbs, a common trend in modern American cities and something that can be attributed to the end of segregation and the continued trend towards suburbanization. “The African-American population in Austin had actually been in decline for years... In a perverse way, the effective end of segregation in the 1960s and ’70s made many of the community’s cultural institutions, from jazz clubs to black colleges, both less necessary and less viable” (Chusid, 2006).

The gentrification task force found that “historic zoning in East Austin has tended to act as a stabilizing agent in neighborhoods with respect to household turnover and compositional change. The commonly held belief that East Austin is experiencing a significant increase in its overall share of White population is not supported by the 2000 Census data. The factual demographic reality is that East Austin is evolving into a predominately Hispanic community” (City of Austin, 2003).

Additional findings from the report confirm many other studies about the relationship between property values and local landmark designation. Individually designated properties did show property value increases that outpaced the study area and city on

average. However, properties in neighborhoods with designated historic landmarks or national historic districts within their boundaries did not show any significant outpacing of property value.

Overall, historic zoning and designation of National Register Historic Districts appear to have had a positive impact on East Austin neighborhoods. City historic landmark designation has helped to stabilize deteriorating neighborhoods and prevent tear-downs of important historic buildings for replacement by larger new construction [leading to increased development pressures and increasing property values], while at the same time retaining the neighborhoods' sense of place and community pride. (City of Austin, 2003).

Another report, done by Economics & Planning Systems (EPS) primarily for Capital Metro, the city's light-rail corporation, conducted a year after the Austin gentrification task force's study found similar results. The report, driven by the redevelopment of a vacant 11-acre industrial site in East Austin, was meant as a guide for mitigating gentrification in area community planning. Though the census-driven analyses were similar to the city-led task force results, the conclusion in this report maintained the stance that gentrification was occurring. Unfortunately, the conclusion drawn by EPS did not factor in displacement and therefore was based simply on increases in income and property values and changes in demographics regardless of race, class, or residential longevity. Furthermore, they did not provide a statistical benchmark past which gentrification is indicated and therefore their conclusions are of uncertain value.

The report quickly dispensed with the statistical analysis portion and moved on to recommendations presumably based on several case studies: the Fruitvale District in

Oakland, California, the Mission District in San Francisco, California, the Fourth Ward District in Houston, Texas, Columbia Heights in Washington, D.C., and the Sweet Auburn Historic District in Atlanta, Georgia (Economics & Planning Systems, 2004). For EPS, these cases indicated two overarching categorical mitigation measures; community involvement in planning and economic aid.

Interestingly, of the 19 mitigation measures suggested in their matrix, the EPS report recommended not one heritage conservation tool. However, of the five case studies they presented, every one of them uses, either expressly or as part of a handful of tools, heritage conservation measures to mitigate gentrification pressures.

- The Sweet Auburn Historic District’s redevelopment efforts have been led by the Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC) whose mission is to “facilitate the preservation and revitalization of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic District” through “historic preservation”, “non-displacement”, and “sustainability”¹⁸.
- Columbia Heights, though not located in an historic district it is almost completely surrounded by local and national historic districts. A \$149 million redevelopment contract centers on the rehabilitation of the Historic Tivoli Theater (Economics & Planning Systems, 2004).

¹⁸ From HDDC website: www.hddc.net Retrieved; February 26, 2010.

- Attempts have been made in Houston's Fourth Ward District to create a mix of market-rate and below-market housing while respecting the area's historic character; "Historic preservation has been a driving force for maintaining a sense of community" (Economics & Planning Systems, 2004).
- San Francisco's Mission District is currently under analysis by the city's planning commission and there is a high likelihood that it will become a historic district in the near future.¹⁹ Historic districting is part of the city's plan to improve the area through 'asset building'.
- The Fruitvale District primary community-based organization, The Unity Council, has engaged in several heritage conservation programs including the rehabilitation of a historic temple and the promotion of a Main Street program. The organization's central theme is based on the principals of Smart Growth, and according to Donovan Rypkema "if a community did nothing but protect its historic residential and commercial neighborhoods it will have advanced every Smart Growth principle (Rypkema D. , 2009).

Five neighborhood plans in East Austin have since been completed all of which now include significant heritage conservation goals including updated historic resources surveys, increased designations of individual buildings and local districts as historic, rehabilitation

¹⁹ For more information see www.sf-planning.org

incentives, and preservation education. The Central East Austin Neighborhood plan specifies the creation of six local historic districts and additional historic resources surveys as two of its top-ten recommendations (City of Austin, 2001)(Map A 6). There has been “near unanimous support” for these districts and now all existing National Historic Districts can become local historic districts (Chusid, 2006). Ironically, PODER, an organization based on promoting environmental justice, has shifted their anti-gentrification focus to fight “smart growth” policies, a movement founded on environmental responsibility.

Jeffrey Chusid (2006) eloquently summarizes the various findings, “preservation can be of assistance to communities facing gentrification by saving community institutions and cultural practices, stabilizing property values, valuing and protecting affordable working-class housing, and providing financial and technical support to low-income owners of historic properties... significant structural issues still impact East Austin, making it vulnerable to gentrification. Ignoring them in order to attack preservation has served no one well—least of all the vanishing African-American community”.

It is perhaps too soon to tell the long-term outcomes of gentrification in East Austin. The area still exhibits several of the factors that point to gentrification, however, the communities and the city of Austin are acutely aware of this process and have been relatively quick to act. The implementation of historic districts, with their guidelines and restrictions,

may help to stabilize property values, diminish development pressures, and retain the social and cultural values of current residents, but it will take time to see this process bear out.

Shaw, Washington, D.C.

The northwest Washington, DC neighborhood of Shaw began to experience gentrification pressures following plans to install a new subway line running from the central business district straight through the neighborhood. Property values skyrocketed as more and more residents moved in. Shaw continues to face gentrification pressures as new portions of the large neighborhood are rediscovered, often following proposals from city agencies to redevelop the area. The political structure in DC is confusing and political boundaries do not line up with neighborhoods. For Shaw this has meant an overreliance on Manna CDC to provide a platform for neighborhood concerns. Though that CDC has worked hard to both conserve the neighborhood assets and preserve affordable housing, there seems to be little coordination between city agencies, development interests, and community concerns. Shaw continues to experience gentrification pressures, but is showing an increasingly developed awareness of how to use its heritage assets to maintain and enhance the neighborhood's sociocultural sustainability.

From its initial settlement and throughout the post-Civil War boom years, the area known today as Shaw was a predominantly black neighborhood with pockets of Irish,

German, and Italian immigrants (Kelsey & Associates, 2002). Segregation policies limited housing opportunities for Washington, D.C.'s black residents and resulted in this area becoming the "center of the professional, commercial, educational and cultural life of Washington's black community" (DC Office of Planning, 2008).

Following the end of housing segregation in the 1950s, this African American enclave began to lose its black population to the suburbs and surrounding neighborhoods, much like in East Austin many of the neighborhood's cultural institutions lost their patrons and their relevance. In 1966, Washington DC's Planning Commission outlined a new neighborhood within what was known as 'Mid-City' and renamed it the *Shaw School Urban Renewal Area*, thus giving the neighborhood its current moniker. The riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968 put a temporary halt to any renewal plans, however, and led to the further decimation the neighborhood, destroying hundreds of buildings and chasing out many more businesses and residents. (Juskus & Elia, 2007).

Shaw, like so many inner city neighborhoods throughout America, experienced widespread blight and economic collapse during the 1970s and 1980s. Then came the proposal and construction of several large-scale redevelopment projects like the old Washington Convention Center (1980/1983), the Reeves Municipal Center (1986) and the Metro's Green Line (1970s through 1990s, Shaw neighborhood late-1980s) which promised growth in the city's downtown periphery but also prompted early concerns of gentrification.

In 1982, local pastor and community activist, Jim Dickerson founded Manna, Inc. a nonprofit low-income housing developer in DC. Since its inception, Manna has produced affordable housing in the area through a combination of rehabilitation and new construction. In the 1990s Manna, Inc. spun off Manna CDC as an organization focused on the Shaw neighborhood. Today Manna CDC is known as ONE CDC. Though Manna and ONE CDC do not expressly promote heritage conservation, they both have endorsed and engaged in historic preservation measures.

Concerns over the detrimental effects of development pressure also prompted one of the first historic building surveys in the area, conducted by the DC group Don't Tear It Down (now known as the DC Preservation League) in 1984 for the area now known as the Mount Vernon Square Historic District (Don't Tear It Down, 1984).

Resistance to heritage conservation tools was also developing around this time. In 1985, the application to extend the boundaries of the Dupont Circle historic district, just west of Shaw, was denied because of opposition during a public hearing. Some Shaw residents feared that historic district status would “accelerate price appreciation, rents, property taxes and evictions” (Gale, 1989). Earlier designations, in the 1970s and even Georgetown in 1950, received almost no opposition. However, growing public concern (and perhaps awareness) of gentrification pressures was leading some residents to make

connections between historic districting and the displacement of poor and working class residents.

In 1989 Dennis Gale published a study on the impact of historic district designation in Washington, DC and found “no evidence to date that historic district designation affects property values” (Gale, 1989). He was quick to point out, however, that there is a possibility that the historic districts had been designated only after price appreciation had already occurred. He also noted, within his own study and of other contemporary studies, that local historic districts with their attached regulations do not see the same price increases as national historic districts which do not place restrictions on private owners.

Community sentiment to heritage conservation seems split. While historic districting was up against a limited amount of opposition, residents of the area had been calling on Manna to rehabilitate the Whitelaw Hotel. The Whitelaw was one of the prominent venues and rest stops for famous entertainers visiting Shaw in the early 20th century. In 1990 Manna undertook the redevelopment of the historic and culturally important hotel using a combination of Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits (HRTC) and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). The application process for historic status, both through the District of Columbia and the National Park Service, was pursued by the project’s architect as a necessary component of receiving the HRTCs. Tax credits were the major source of equity for the project; HRTC and LIHTC constituted approximately \$2.7 million or 63% of the

project's total cost (Rennekar, 2001). The hotel, now apartments, continues to house Section 8 and moderate income families.

Slowly, beginning in the 1990s, the Shaw community began to show signs of recovery. "Stimulated by the construction of a major city government building in the heart of Shaw, the community began to undergo a true transformation. Restaurants and jazz clubs began to reopen and many of the older historical buildings were restored to former glory. Today, Shaw is one of the Washington, D.C.'s most desirable communities" (NeighborWorks America, 2005).

Within the Shaw neighborhood today there are three local historic districts; Shaw (est. 1999, expanded from the Blagden Alley/Naylor Court, est. 1990²⁰), Greater U Street (est. 1998), and Mount Vernon Square (est. 1999). These overlap with several National Historic Districts all established during the same period. There has also been a recent historic resources survey in the portion of Shaw not covered by a historic district. Recommendations from the survey suggest the enlargement of two of the existing districts to cover this space. Shaw is surrounded by several other historic districts. Additionally, there is the Shaw Main Street program covering the 7th, 8th and 9th Street corridors and the Duke Redevelopment plan, all focusing on heritage conservation tools to preserve and enhance the neighborhood (Map A 9).

²⁰ Significant opposition to the incorporation of the Blagden Alley/Naylor Court Historic District into the larger Shaw historic District led to the reestablishment of the smaller district within the larger.

The most recent wave of development has come in the last decade with the new convention center and the expansion and updating of the Green Line transportation hubs. “There were deep subsidies for private investment such as luxury condos, hotels, and businesses catering to visitors, all planned to accompany a new convention center. With investment creeping in from Chinatown/Penn Quarter on the south side of the neighborhood and resurgence along the U Street corridor to the north, the city launched the Duke Plan in 2005 specifically for Shaw” (Juskus & Elia, 2007). Named after Duke Ellington, the plan aims to attract new investment to Shaw by drawing from the area's rich cultural history (DC Office of Planning, 2004).

There are several other major planning initiatives and a dozen large developments currently in progress in Shaw, some of which are engaging the historic built environment, namely, the Great Streets program rehabilitating the historic Howard Theater, The Convention Center Area Strategic Development Plan, which is working to preserve historic housing in the area around the convention center, the Mount Vernon Square Design Guide, which will help guide development within the historic district, and the DUKE plan, mentioned earlier (DC Office of Planning, 2008).

Shaw continues to be predominantly African-American, though it represents a much more diverse area than it did 30 years ago. The area is roughly composed of six census tracts²¹

²¹ 1990 and earlier there were seven census tracts; 44 and 45 were consolidated into Tract 44 for the 2000 census.

that in total hold a population of around 15-16,000 residents. The black population has dramatically declined over the last several decades and since 1980 other races have begun to make up a significant minority in the neighborhood, somewhat consistent with patterns seen in the entire DC area. Household incomes in Shaw have been on the rise, outpacing DC but still below the metro area average and about 23% of the population is still below the poverty line. Property values have also increased dramatically and are slightly above the DC average. Meanwhile, rents remain below the DC average and actually decreased slightly from 1990 to 2000. Almost three out of every four households rents and vacancy rates remain high, at around 15%²².

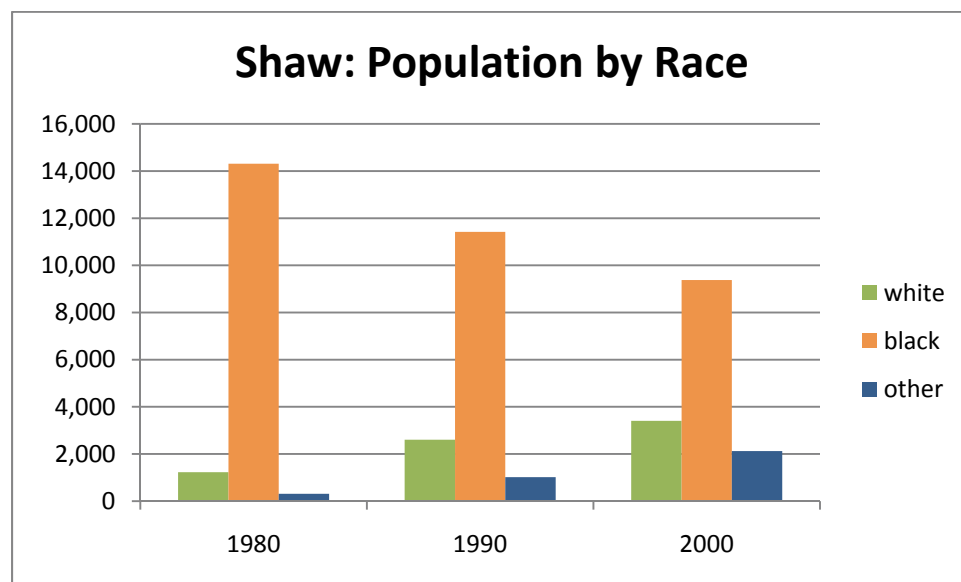


Figure 0-2: Population by race in Shaw, Washington, DC. US Census data for census tracts 43, 44, 48.01, 48.02, 49.01, and 49.02 retrieved from www.socialexplorer.com.

²² Census data retrieved from Socialexplorer.com using 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 data for census tracts 43, 44, 48.01, 48.02, 49.01, and 49.02. A small portion of the Shaw Historic District falls within census tract 50.

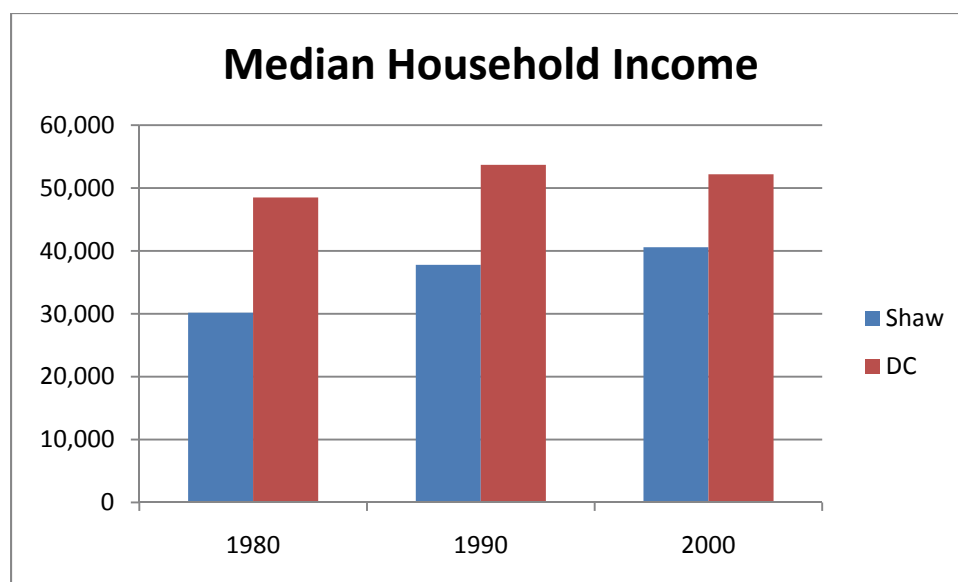


Figure 0-3: Median household value in Shaw compared to Washington DC. US Census data retrieved from www.socialexplorer.com

The area within the Greater U Street Historic District²³ has the highest income levels and highest housing values in Shaw and seems to skew census averages to the high side. This area is also the most diverse, racially and economically, and has a high number of commercial properties. The Whitelaw apartments are located in this district.

Shaw is without a doubt primed for gentrification: relatively inexpensive housing, high rate of renters, high vacancy, an exiting population, close to the CBD, new commercial venues, the list goes on and on. Affordable housing in Shaw is one of the primary concerns of neighborhood residents and community organizations and several of the major development plans have implemented stakeholder input by including low-income housing elements.

²³ Census Tracts 43 and 44

Several heritage conservation initiatives in Shaw have shown to be effective in mitigating the negative effects of gentrification.

Home ownership programs have put residents in historic homes and given them a sense of stewardship and pride, rather than placing residents in section 8 rentals that expire after 15 years, often leading property owners to choose conversion to market-rate housing or condominiums. Combining Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits creates a substantial amount of equity for development projects and creates more jobs, less waste and last longer than many new-construction alternatives. And historic districting, when applied to neighborhoods that have already been hit with escalating prices can help to stabilize the housing market. Where prices are moderate and little speculative activity has occurred, historic districting can be accompanied by government programs that earmark tax revenue gains for housing assistance while slowing inconsistent development schemes (Gale, 1989).

In Shaw, heritage conservation tools have been applied with mixed results. City-led redevelopment plans are based on heritage tourism, or use heritage to help promote unrelated developments like the convention center. These efforts are driven by the potential for economic return and rely on large-scale rebranding of the area. True, they have been successful in bringing in new investments, however the conservation projects are applied as a pastiche over the all-too-familiar, but highly evolved, urban renewal scheme.

At the other end of the spectrum, Manna's forays into heritage conservation are driven largely by a desire to improve community life. In this way heritage conservation is well suited to mitigate gentrification's downsides. The targeted rehabilitation of buildings within a neighborhood helps to anchor the community to its place by connecting the present to the past and creating something for future generations.

Ultimately, Shaw could benefit from a middle ground where city-led initiatives worked closely with community groups like Manna to create smaller-scale rehabilitation initiatives. At the same time, the numerous historic districts would benefit from coordination as well, filling in the gaps and formalizing design guides to give clear and specific guidance for new development and rehabilitation.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

In these cases and others we find that gentrification pressures are driven by a wide range of forces. In Society Hill, a deteriorated neighborhood underwent drastic changes in a relatively short period of time as part of a city-led renewal plan. In East Austin, gentrification was caused by regional growth patterns. As the central business district of Austin has expanded, so too has the need for affordable housing – much of it found in East Austin – driving up housing costs. In Shaw, gentrification has followed efforts to revitalize a broken neighborhood. After the 1968 riots Shaw was deeply wounded and only in the last few years

have decades of initiatives finally stabilized the area. The concern now is how to prevent displacement and maintain the community's cultural identity.

In all three cases, heritage conservation has been used by different types of actors, from city historic preservation agencies, development corporations, community groups, and individuals. The range of outcomes that have been found illustrates the malleability and adaptability of heritage conservation tools.

Name	Society Hill	East Austin	Shaw
Catalysts of gentrification	Urban renewal plan	Rent gap and population trends	Development projects
Reactions to gentrification pressures	Formation of community association. Relocation services provided by HUD and RDA.	Formation of grassroots activist group and subsequent city-sponsored task forces.	Formation of CDC. Incorporation of low-income housing into development plans.
Heritage conservation role	Reconstruction, renovation and rehabilitation of historic houses.	Individual and historic district nominations and designations.	Heritage goals incorporated into planning. Expansion of local districts.

Mitigation effects	Minimal, however, conservation may have enabled 1/3 of the preexisting residents to remain	Property value stabilization. Recognition of diverse cultural values.	Combined HRTC and LIHTC projects. Community heritage used as economic catalyst.
Current state of gentrification	Stable	Moderate	Threatened

Residents may be displaced as a result of housing demolition, ownership conversion of rental units, increased housing costs (rent, taxes), or landlord harassment and evictions. Those who avoid these direct displacement pressures may benefit from neighborhood improvements but may suffer as social and cultural networks are lost (Freeman and Braconi, 2004; Atkinson, 2000; Marcuse, 1986). Heritage conservation has proven to be effective in mitigating some of this displacement and loss.

Local historic districts and individual designations force developers to reconsider demolition. Studies show that local historic districts are more stable, housing values show less fluctuation and residents tend to remain in historic districts longer. The creation of community-centered associations and corporations often produces a platform for community concerns. In many cases, well organized community groups assist residents in landlord disputes and moderate development proposal charettes.

Just like any tool, different actors and interests use heritage conservation to achieve various ends. In Society Hill, failure to recognize the value of the 19th and early-20th century environment has resulted in a long-standing tarnish on opinions of the renewal plan. In Shaw, the scattered rehabilitation of housing has not been as effective as the block-by-block approach used in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District. The effects of heritage marketing can also have mixed results. The DUKE plan may bring renewed interest and investment to Shaw at the expense of integrity, perhaps in the form of a loss of long-term homeowners and businesses that cannot adapt to the demands of the new economy.

What seems most apparent in the three case studies here is that heritage conservation has been used in a variety of ways, sometimes to the benefit of the community by sustaining longstanding sociocultural systems. In fact, all three cases appear to demonstrate that *not enough* heritage conservation planning is at issue, rather than too much. Society Hill would have benefited from stakeholder consultations and a values-based approach, East Austin has found that more districts and guidelines will do more to benefit the community than less, and Shaw neighborhoods would benefit from stronger legislation with clear design guidelines and more incentivized programs.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

The challenges of gentrification can best be met by implementing strategies that enable low-income residents to stay anchored in their neighborhoods and to thrive – Angela Glover Blackwell, PolicyLink

In the urban environment, cyclical succession models where social and economic investment and divestment alternate within different neighborhoods at different rates cause a number of changes that are perceived over several generations. Within the investment cycle, increased development pressures can lead to gentrification. Within the divestment cycle, rent gap and demand-side theorems suggest gentrification will occur when conditions become dire enough. When gentrification pressures become present, residents seek measures of protection. These come in several forms; historic district designations seek to protect the cultural character of the neighborhood while low-income housing and rent-freezes protect the human character of the neighborhood. Values-based heritage conservation programs, by assessing cultural assets and community needs, bridge the gap between sociocultural programs and economic realities to create lasting sociocultural sustainability.

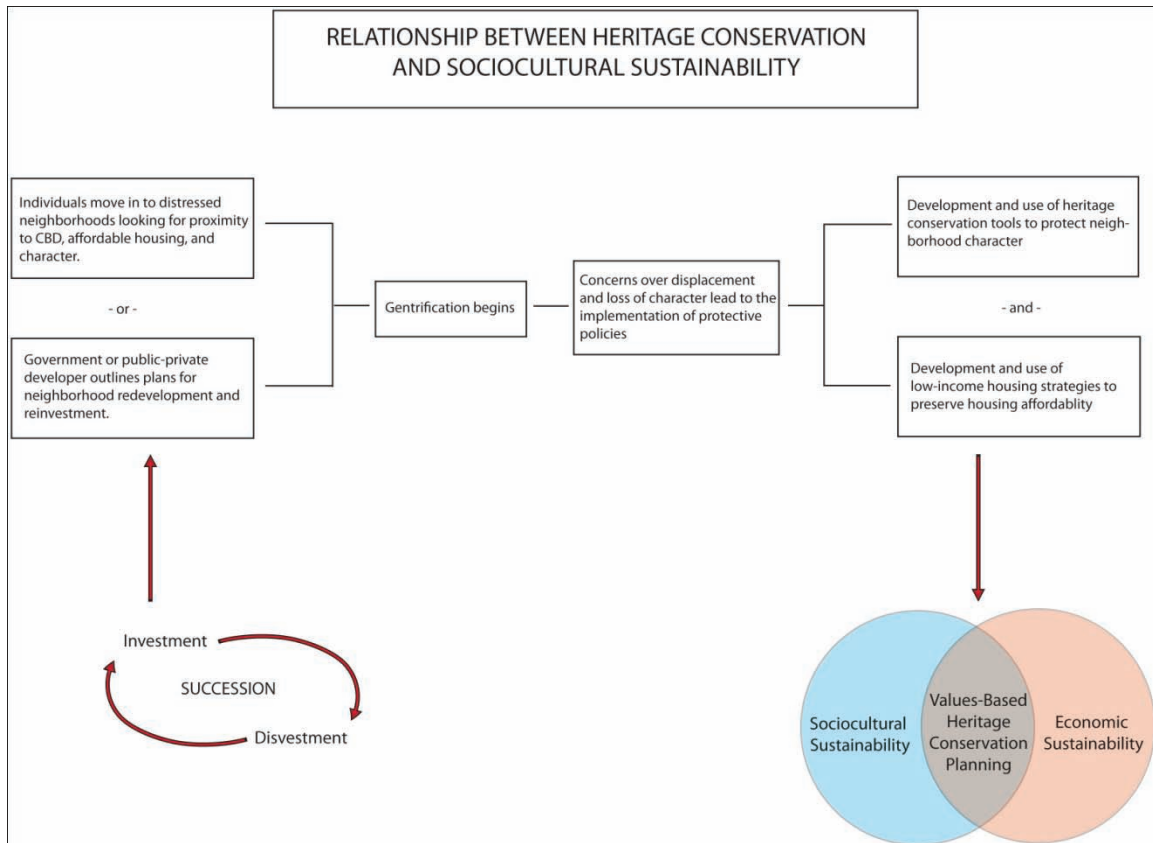


Figure 0-4: Diagrammatic flow illustrating the relationship between heritage conservation and sociocultural sustainability. Author, 2010.

Heritage conservation is the conscientious and inclusive planning process that evaluates the historic fabric and current values that exist within a neighborhood in order to develop a plan that will ensure the protection, restoration, and rehabilitation of the neighborhood as a whole. Heritage conservation has long been on the side of neighborhood activists seeking to protect their stake in a place.

Modern practice in urban heritage conservation planning is a far cry from the historic preservation of the homes of “rich, white, dead men”. At the neighborhood level, heritage

conservation seeks to enhance the temporal diversity of place. That is, neighborhood conservation is not about selecting a past in which only the wealthy lived but in conserving the richly diverse histories of the places that historic neighborhoods represent. Conservation is also about enhancing the present social and cultural integrity of place. Without the support of current residents the sustainability of a heritage neighborhood is at risk.

If the individual and independent rehabilitation of housing in a transitional neighborhood is at one end of the spectrum in the model of gentrification, then large scale development, conversion, demolition and construction are at the other. Even the staunchest of critics would have to agree that the private rehabilitation activities of a few in-movers have little to no effect on the character, let alone the residents, of older neighborhoods. “Increasing demolition, affordable housing problems, housing market failure... appear as strategies linked to renewal but also to gentrification” (Atkinson, 2003). In this context intuition would suggest that the camps of heritage conservation and housing policy would be aligned. More partnerships in this area should be encouraged.

From the cases presented here it is clear that the outcomes of heritage conservation planning depend as much on the way conservation is used as by whom. Successful cases happen when local governments coordinate with community groups and CDCs. Governments and their agencies provide the funding and expertise while community groups

have an intimate understanding of the place they occupy. This type of coordination leads to any number of achievable goals.

Heritage conservation provides the tools to control the scope and pace of development. National Register Historic District designation protects neighborhoods from government action and opens up the availability of federal historic preservation tax credits. Local districts give communities control over the scope and rate of development and protect neighborhoods from detrimental changes. Individual designations offer protection against demolition and incompatible change and can be a source of pride for community members. Heritage conservation incentives help to stimulate the economy and promote valuable programs. Heritage tourism continues to be one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry and can be just the right kind of economic generator for a community. Programs like heritage areas and conservation districts are alternative programs that may suit neighborhoods that would not benefit as much from historic districts. Heritage conservation provides opportunities for education, training, entertainment and innumerable other experiences enjoyed at the local and national level.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Department of Interior Section 106 historic preservation requirements are burdensome to low-income homeowners and providers of affordable housing. Low-income homeowners and those who provide housing for low-income households are required to have proposed improvements reviewed and changed by a State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) or certified local government (CLG) if they are using federal funds. The National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has developed documents that intend to streamline this process and relieve some of the burdens. However, further research needs to be conducted to determine the effect of the restrictions on the ability to provide low-income housing in historic buildings.

One of the more common concerns residents have with historic district regulations is the increased cost the requirements place on homeowners. More research needs to be done showing the life-cycle cost analysis of the common requirements, e.g. restoring rather than replacing materials or replacing in-kind rather than with unsympathetic materials. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has made some headway in this area.

There are no empirical studies that compare the impact of new development on sociocultural sustainability to that of rehabilitation's effects. Anecdotally, it would appear that new development, in housing, commercial, institutional and municipal arenas, leads to

intense and catalytic gentrification pressures. It may be possible to create a dollar-for-dollar comparison illustrating the difference in sociocultural costs.

More cities experiencing gentrification should undertake taskforce studies like the ones done in Austin, evaluating the impact of heritage conservation and gentrification. These studies are invaluable resources that shed light on effective and ineffective policies and serve to improve heritage conservation programs and awareness of such.

Scholars of sociocultural sustainability have been developing indicators and metrics that can be applied to heritage conservation programs. The table in appendix A10 is a sampling of sociocultural outcomes from scholarly literature with suggestions for measurement. Further development in this area will allow for more precise comparative analysis of sociocultural impact.

There seems to be a relationship between industrial land use and gentrification that may be clarified through future research. As industrial use becomes less necessary in the city center and industry (large and small) exits a neighborhood, the parcels of land left behind are difficult for individual to acquire and reuse. Additionally, these industries may have been important factors in discouraging potential inmoving populations.

FINAL WORDS

The historic built environment has an incredible ability to evoke strong emotions. For many, the built environment holds memories, cultural meaning, and a sense of place in the world. However, no place is frozen in time and investment and divestment, both economically and socioculturally, change a place over time. The role of heritage conservation is to work within that context of change to find ways to preserve valued places while maintaining and enhancing other contemporary values. In a word, heritage conservation endeavors to make the historic built environment *relevant*.

Often, the question is asked; “Whose history is to be conserved, whose values are being protected?” These are tough questions with no easy answers. But the best answer may be “Yours”. Values-based heritage conservation seeks to evaluate and assess historic assets and match them with contemporary needs. Good conservation programs start with the community and work outwards. The goal of heritage conservation is to project the past into the future and the only way this is done successfully is by seeking triple-bottom line sustainability in values-based conservation planning.

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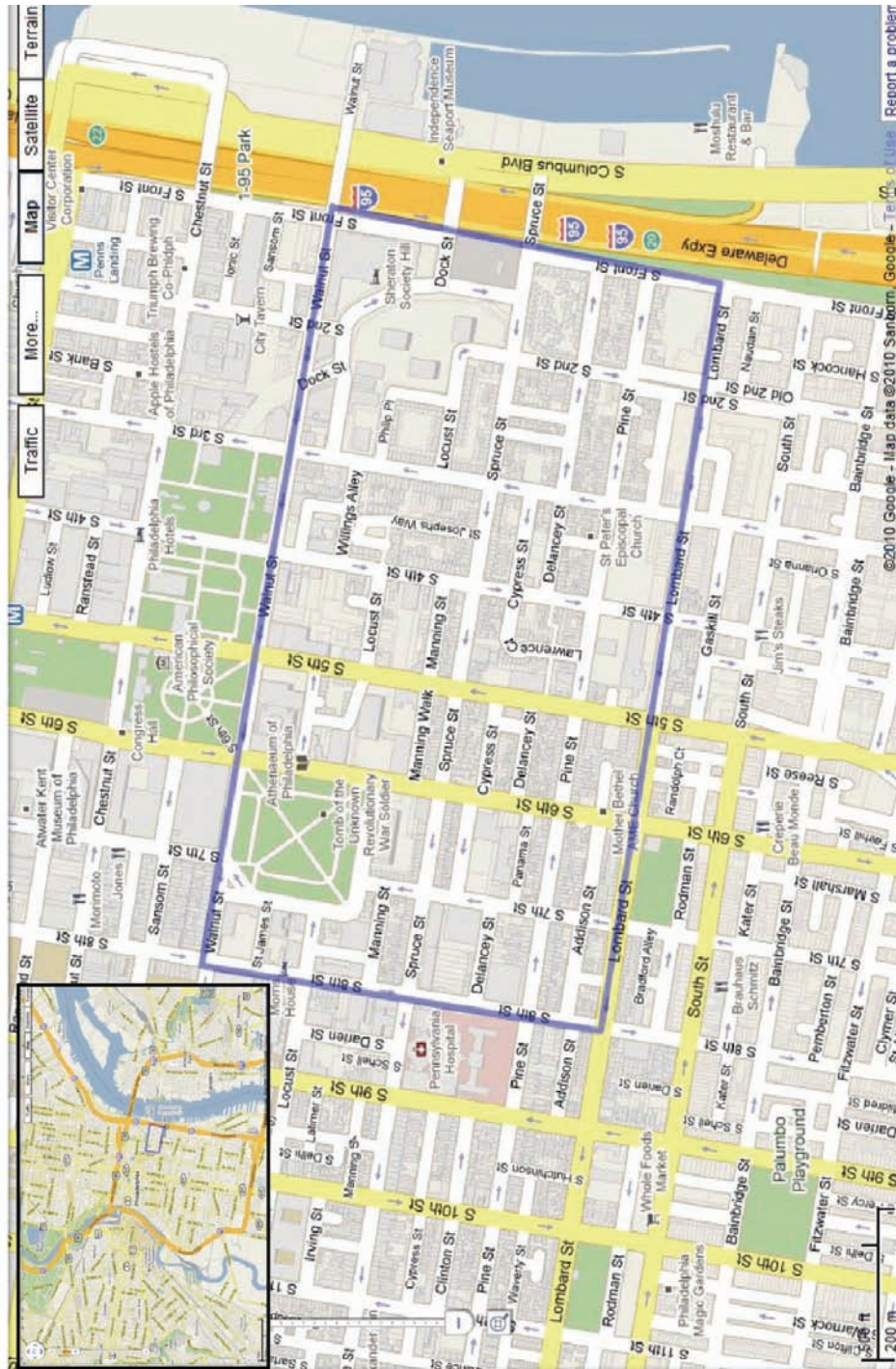
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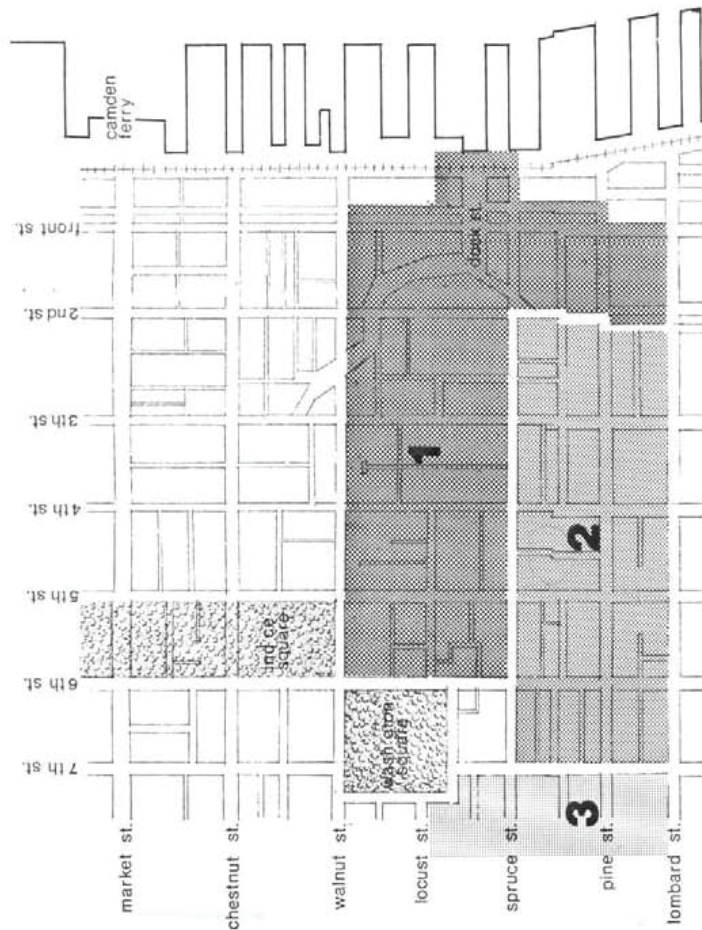
Appendix

Society Hill, Philadelphia, PA



A 1: Map of Society Hill. Retrieved from www.maps.google.com

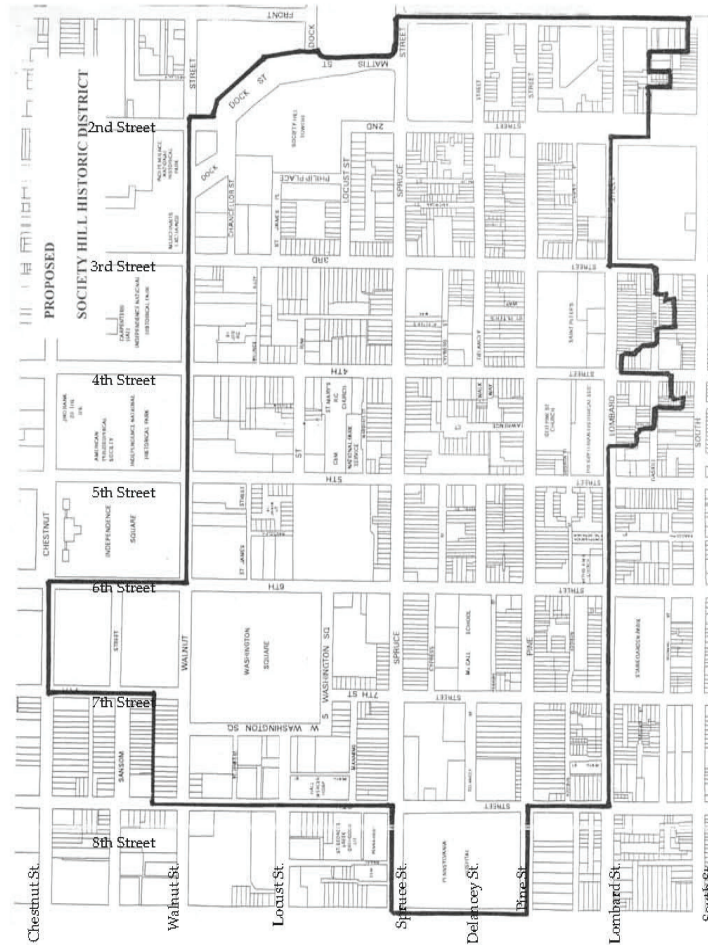
Washington Square East



Society Hill, Philadelphia: A Report of the Presentation to the Seminar on Case Studies in Urban Design.
UD 716, The Urban Design Program Graduate School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania, 1978, fig. 12.

A 2: Washington Square East Redevelopment Plan Unit Map. Unit 4 not shown. Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania (1978).

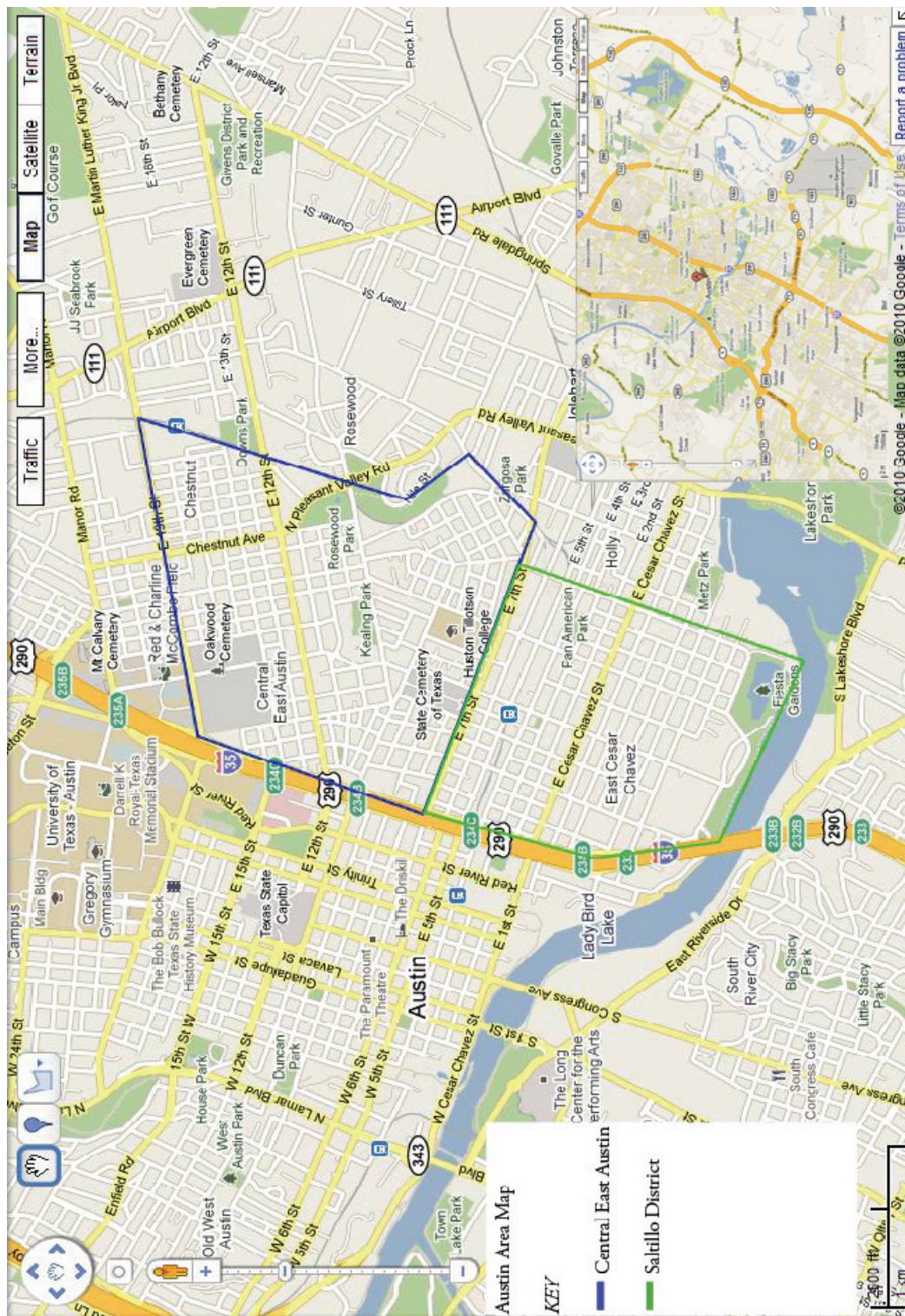
Society Hill Historic District



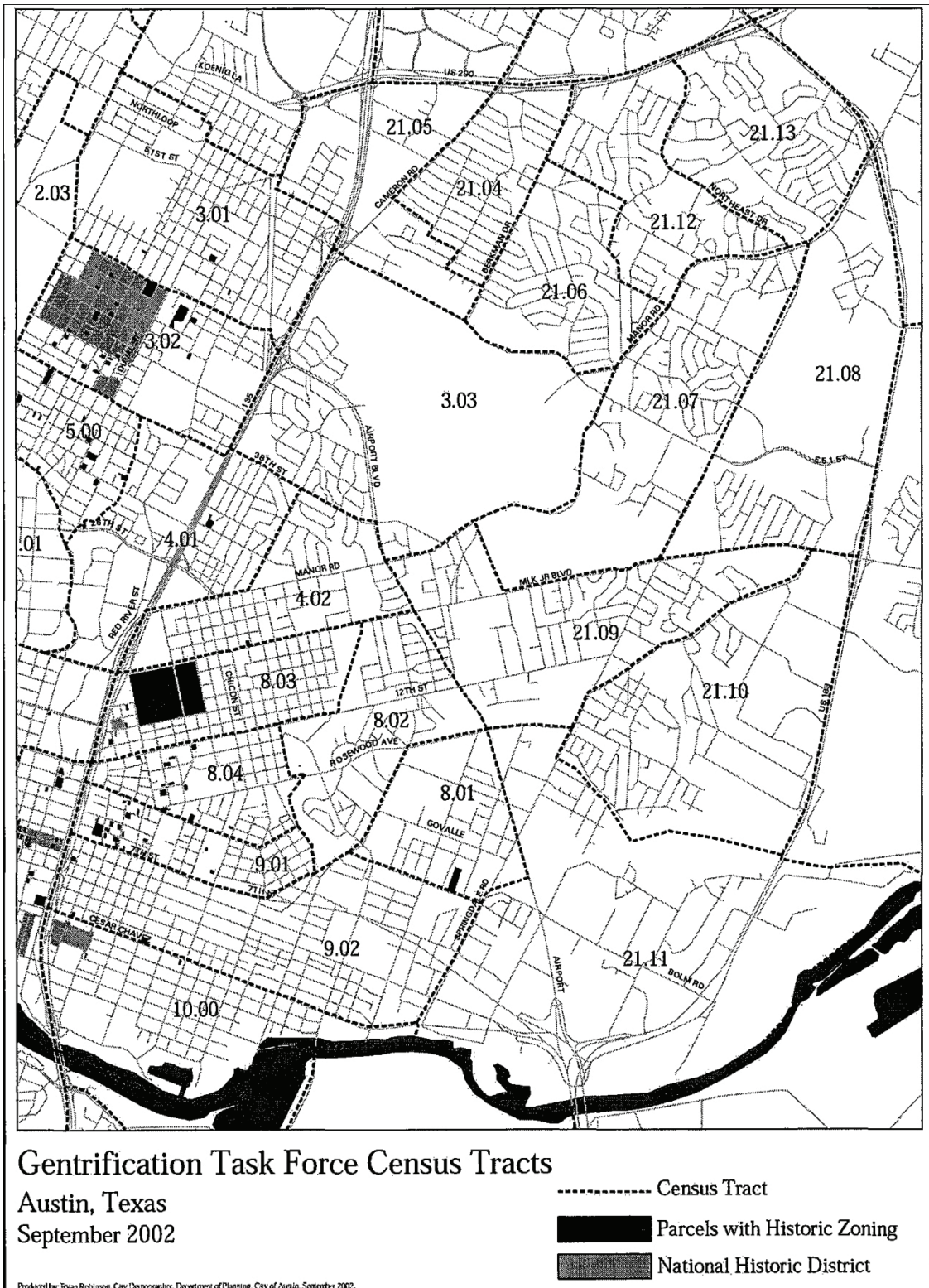
National Register Nomination for the Society Hill Historic District. Philadelphia Historical Commission.

9th Street

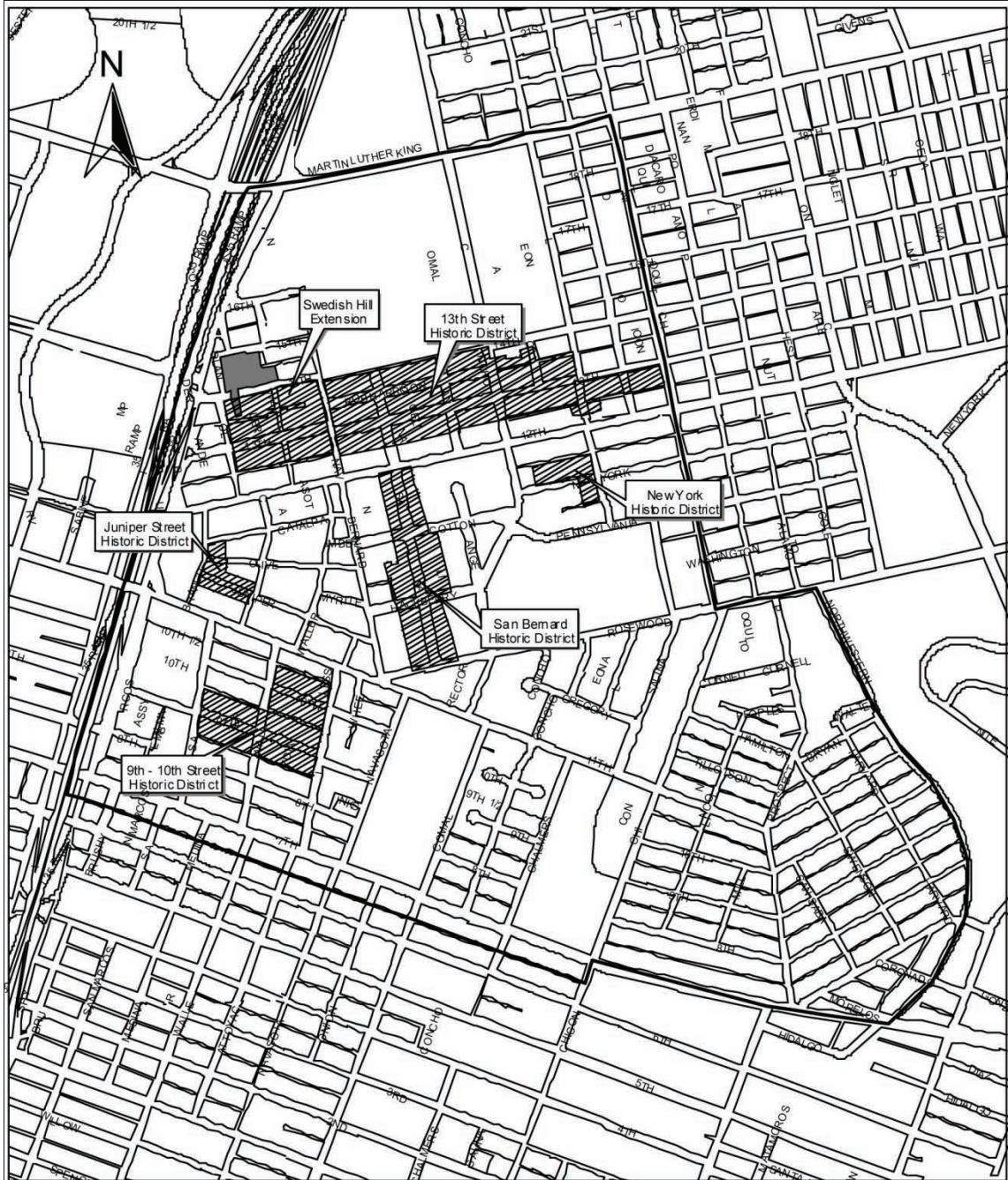
A 3: Society Hill Historic District. Courtesy of Philadelphia Historical Commission.



A 4: Map of East Austin area. Author, retrieved from maps.google.com



A 5: Austin area Historic Districts and Parcels. City of Austin (2002).



**Historic Districts
(National Register Eligible)**

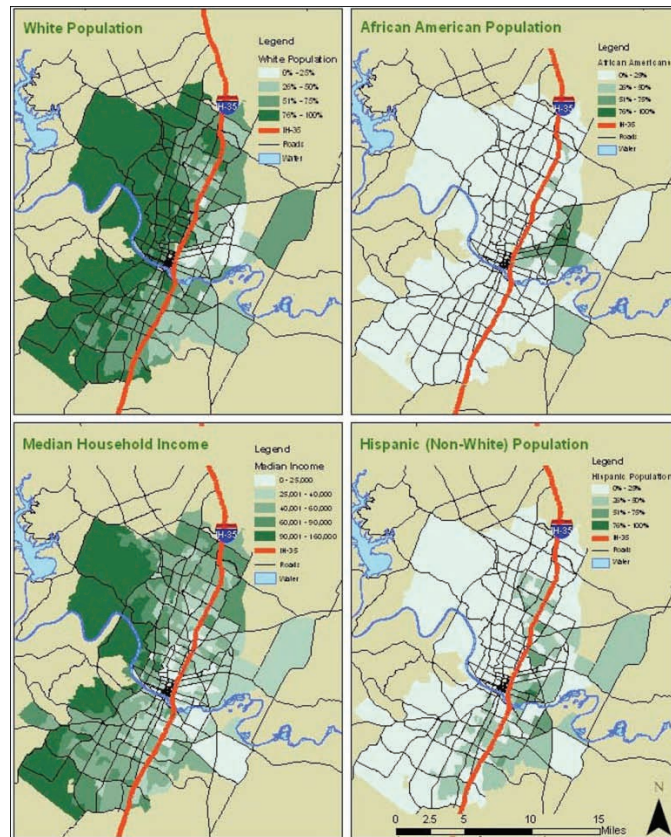


Neighborhood Planning &
Zoning Department
June 2001

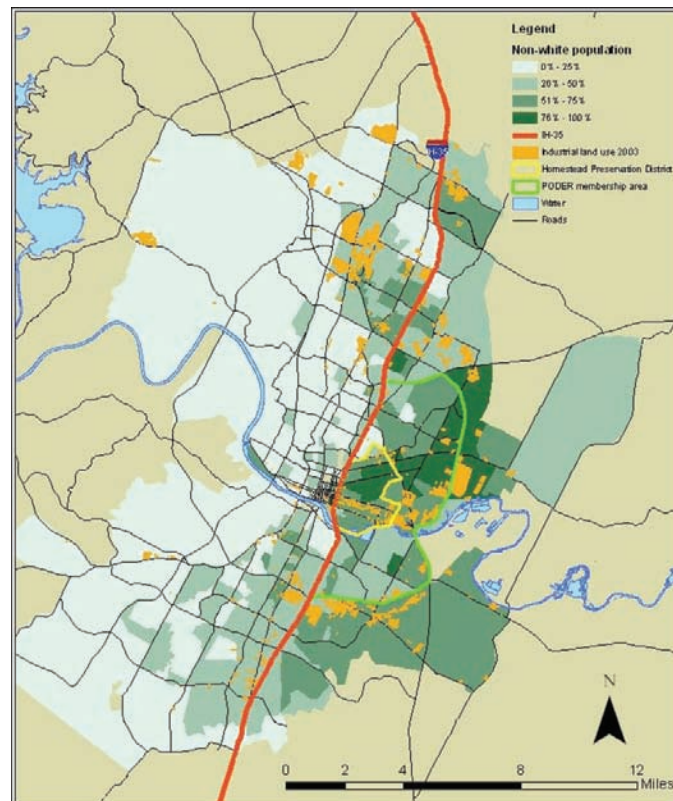
Proposed districts identified in the
City of Austin Historic Resource Survey
of East Austin - September 2000.

- CEA Boundary
- Existing Historic District
- Proposed Historic District

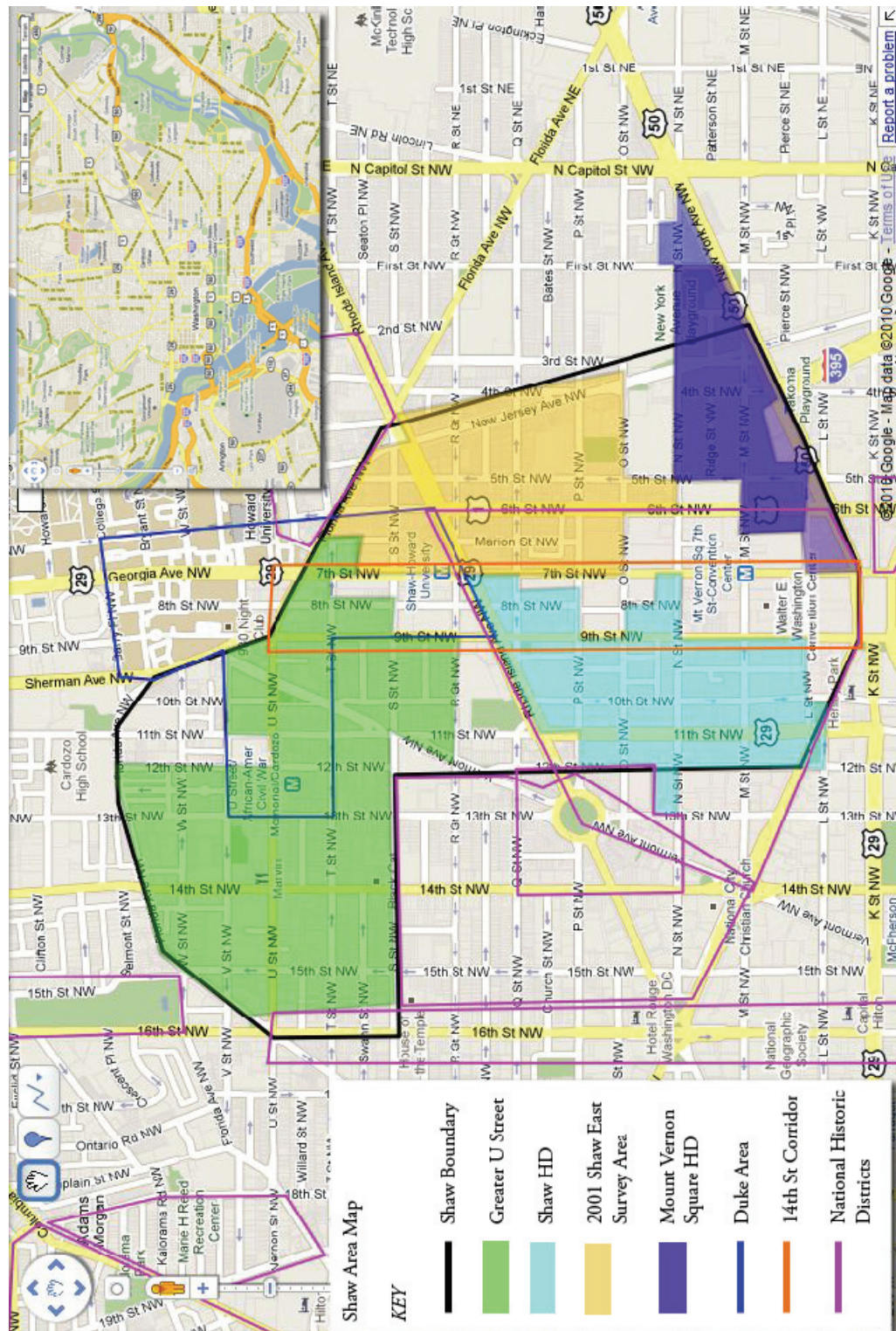
A 6: Proposed East Austin historic districts. City of Austin (2001)



A 7: Race and Income distribution in Austin, Texas. Courtesy of Walsh (2007).



A 8: Land use and minority population in Austin, Texas. Courtesy of Walsh (2007).



A 9: Shaw area map with Historic Districts. Author, retrieved from google.com

Literature survey of sociocultural sustainability outcomes	Count	Suggested Metrics	Hancock (1990)	McKenzie (2004)	Avrami (2004)	EPSD (2004)	Hans-Bockler-Stiftung, (2001)	Omann and Spangenberg(2002)	Baines and Morgan, (2004) and Sinner et al, (2004)	Frey (2007)	Balderstone (2004)	LCA (Kohler and Moffat) (2004)
Equitable / Accessible	8	ADA compliance Proximity to Public Transportation Proximity to consumer needs Fair distribution of resources	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Meets Basic Needs	7	Adequate health facilities Sanitation Environmental hazard mitigation Adequate Police presense	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Enhances Education	5	Adequate schools and Libraries, Number of schools that benefit from the project. Adult Education and training Continuing Education	X	X	X	X		X				
Preserves Cultural Diversity, Tradition, Integrity, History	5	Maintenance of preexisting cultural resources	X	X	X				X	X		
Enhances Well-being/Conviviality	4	Residential stability, platform for resolution of community disputes	X		X					X	X	X
Democratic/Self-determined	4	Integration of stakeholders in the planning and management process	X	X			X		X			
Employment (quality, quantity, variety)	4	Use of stand emplyment metrics			X	X	X	X				
Social Capital (Civic/Community Pride)	4	Regular community events			X				X	X	X	X
Livable/ Incresed Quality of Life	3	Walkability	X							X	X	
Intergenerational (also knowledge, memory, bequest)	3	Plans for the future, respects past customs		X	X				X			X
Local Stewardship/Responsibility	2	Local control of resources		X					X			
Sense of Place/ Identity	2	Community design guidelines, branding								X	X	
Recreation	1	Adequate cultural institutions (i.e. museums, theaters, music venues, etc.)		X								
Infrastructure and transportation	1	Public Transportation Maintained Sidewalks Well lit Streets		X								
Housing	1	Housing for the elderly and aging Low-Income housing		X								
Innovation and Technology	1	Incentives for high-tech industry Use of technology in public institutions					X					
Open/Green Space	0	Adequate open and green space										

A 10: Table of Sociocultural Sustainability Outcomes and possible metrics. Developed by Author, 2010.

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